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NO WORK WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THIS JOURNAL WITHOUT HAVING PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED THE SANCTION OF GENTLEMEN EMINENT IN LITERATURE.

ever, the symptoms at last became favorable. During all the time in which it was doubtful whether he was to die or to live, the mind of the patient himself was hardly more cruelly agitated between fear and hope, than that of every slave, male and female, that belonged to him. And when he was pronounced to be out of danger, so fully was he loaded with their hatred, that the news produced a shock like that of electricity over his whole family. A number of slaves who happened to be at work in the garden under the window of Zeluco's bed-chamber, burst into a loud and uncontrollable howl of sorrow when his recovery was first announced to them.

The patient, alarmed at the sound, asked the physician then sitting by his bedside, what it meant. The physician, who understood it no more than Zeluco, went to inquire, and, having discovered the true source of the outcry, returned to the patient.

What is the meaning of that howl? said Zeluco; it seemed prompted by sorrow.

It proceeded from your slaves, answered the physician; they are inquiring after your health.

Well, what then? cried Zeluco.

Why then, answered the doctor, I suppose they must have been told, by mistake, that you are worse, and likely to die. I have frequently known slaves express their grief in the same manner, when they were in danger of losing a good and humane master.

The irony of this reply was wormwood to Zeluco; he fell into a gloomy fit of musing, and made no further inquiry; neither did he, during his illness, or after his recovery, give any satisfactory account of the manner in which he had received the wound. Whatever his opinion might be, his fears were dissipated; and when he was able to weigh circumstances, he abstained from suggesting any suspicion against particular persons, or from making any investigation of the subject.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Ye who one bitter drop have drain'd
From slavery's cup, with horror stain'd;
Oh, let no fatal drops be found,
But dash her chalice to the ground."

Helen Maria Williams.

FOR a considerable time after Zeluco was out of danger from his wound, and even after he began to walk abroad, and resume the management of his affairs, he appeared more pensive than formerly; and although his thoughts seemed of a gloomy nature, yet he did not burst into those violent fits of rage that had been customary with him before that accident. But the impression which it made on his mind gradually diminished, and the sentiments of dread and remorse, which influenced his conduct for a time, wearing quite away, his former dispositions returned with his bodily health.

One day as he was walking around his estate with the physician already mentioned, who had called upon him on his return from visiting a patient, Zeluco gave pretty strong indications of a relapse into his former cruelty. The physician, who was a man of sense and humanity, checked him, and expressed sentiments of compassion for the deplorable condition of the poor slaves.

They are, said Zeluco, the most villainous race alive.

They certainly are the most unfortunate, said the physician.

Let them perform their task as they ought, replied the other, and they will not be unfortunate.

Why, it is not a slight misfortune, said the doctor, to have such tasks to perform.

They are in a better situation than when they were in their own country.

That would be difficult to prove, said the physician; but were it certain, I should think it a bad reason for treating them ill here, merely because they had been very ill treated there.

Negro slaves in general, all over the West Indies, said Zeluco, are in a better condition than the common people in most countries in Europe. I have heard this asserted a thousand times.

If it were so, said the physician, it would convey a dreadful idea of the condition of Europeans; but the thing is impossible, signor.

How impossible? said Zeluco.

Because, even if slaves were in general fed and clothed as well as you are yourself, yet while it is in the power of their master to impose what task he pleases, and punish their faults according to his humor, their condition must be infinitely worse than that of the cottager, whom nobody can abuse with impunity, and on whom the cheering spirit of liberty smiles as he reaps the fruit of his own industry.

You have certainly, said Zeluco, borrowed that sentiment from an Englishman: some of those enthusiastic fools who were pleased to bear the insolence of mobs, and to sacrifice many of the conveniences of life to the empty shade of freedom. Yet I have heard some, even of their West India proprietors, assert that the negroes of those islands were happier than the common laborers in England.

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There is nothing too absurd for some men to assert, said the physician, when they imagine their interest is concerned, or when it tends to justify their conduct. And were a law to be proposed now against the slave trade, or to render the condition of slaves more tolerable than it is at present, which is more likely to happen among the generous enthusiasts you mention than in any other country, it would perhaps be opposed by those very proprietors: but would you impute such opposition to tenderness to the slaves, and a humane wish to prevent their becoming as miserable as the common laborers in England?

I am told, however, replied Zeluco, that your English in general are a most luxurious race, and that there is much melancholy and discontent in their country with all their liberty.

I am told, answered the physician, that there is much frost and cold in their country with all their sunshine, yet it has not been as yet clearly proved that the sun is the cause of either.

Well, but to return to the slaves, said Zeluco, I do not perfectly understand what is your drift. Are they not my property? Have I not therefore a right to oblige them to labor for my profit?

With regard to the right which any man has to make a property of other men, and force them to labor as slaves solely for his benefit, I suspect it would be difficult for the greatest casuist that ever lived to make it out.

Why so? replied Zeluco; I am assured that the slave-trade is authorized by the Bible. You are too sound a Christian, my good doctor, to controvert such authority.

Without considering whether those who furnished you with that argument did it with friendly or unfriendly intentions to the Bible, signor, and without touching any controvertible point in the Scriptures, I will just observe, that charity, benevolence, and mercy to our fellow-creatures, are not only authorized, but in the plainest unequivocal terms repeatedly ordained, in those writings. Let therefore the proprietors of slaves begin, by conforming their conduct to those injunctions, and then they may be allowed to quote Scripture authority in support of such property.—*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.—Whosoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them.—Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*—These are the words of the author of Christianity, whose whole life was a representation by action of his own precepts. Let the proprietors of estates in America and the West India islands consider how far their treatment of the negroes is agreeable to his doctrine and conduct; and their time will be better employed than in perverting detached passages of the Bible, and endeavoring to press that which is proclaimed peace on earth, and good-will to men, into the service of cruelty and oppression.

After all this fine sermon, said Zeluco, you do not pretend to assert that negroes are originally on a footing with white people; you will allow, I hope, that they are an inferior race of men?

I will allow, replied the doctor, that their hair is short and ours is long, that their noses are flat and ours are raised, and their skin is black and ours white; yet after all these concessions, I still have my doubts respecting our right to make them slaves.

Well, doctor, said Zeluco, if you are determined to dispute our right, you must admit that we have the power, which is of much more importance.

While I admit that, signor, I most sincerely wish it were otherwise exercised.

How the devil would you have it exercised?

We should, in my opinion, exercise it with more moderation and lenity than some of us do, said the physician.

Lenity, cried Zeluco, to a parcel of rascals, a gang of pilfering dogs, downright thieves! why, as often as they can, they steal the very provisions intended for my own table!

You cannot be much surprised at that, signor, when they are pinched with hunger.

You would have them pampered with delicacies, forsooth, and never punished for any crime?

No, sir; but I would certainly allow them a sufficient quantity of wholesome food; and perceiving that all my neighbors are liable to commit faults, and being conscious of many failings in myself, I should not expect that poor untutored slaves were to be exempted from them, nor would I be relentless or unforgiving when they are discovered.

Po, poh—that is not the way to deal with negroes; nothing is to be made of them by lenity; they are the laziest dogs in the world; it is with the greatest difficulty sometimes that my manager can get them roused to their morning work.

Consider, signor, how natural it is after hard labor to wish to prolong the intervals of rest.

Rest! cried Zeluco angrily; they will have rest enough in their graves.

Well, signor, replied the physician, shocked at this brutal remark, it would be fortunate for some people that they could promise themselves the same.

But, doctor, said Zeluco, taking no notice of the last observation, can you really imagine that such treatment as you

seem to recommend, would render slaves of equal benefit to the proprietors of West India estates?

Ay, signor, replied the physician, that is coming directly to the point, which a man of sense would wish to investigate, leaving all the foreign matter concerning religion and humanity, which embarrass the argument, out of the question.

Well, considering the business with a view to a man's interest or profit only; long observation on the conduct of others, with my own experience, which has been considerable, convinces me that the master who treats his slaves with humanity and well-directed kindness, reaps more benefit from their labor than he who behaves in a contrary manner. There are many instances of ingratitude, to be sure, but it is not natural to the human heart: we naturally endeavor ourselves to those to whom we impart pleasure, and men in general serve with more alacrity and perseverance from love than fear. The instant that the eye of the manager is turned from the slave who serves from fear alone, his efforts relax; but the industry of him who serves from attachment is continually prompted by the gratitude and the regard for his master's interest which he carries in his breast.

Besides, signor, how infinitely more pleasing is it to be considered as the distributor of happiness than the inflictor of pain! What man, who has it in his power to be loved as a benefactor, would choose to be detested as an executioner, and see sorrow, terror, and abhorrence in the countenances he daily beholds? Come, signor, continued the physician, having during the course of your illness given you many advices for which you have paid me, pray accept of one from me gratis; you will reap much satisfaction from it, and it may prevent your being exposed to new dangers, similar to that from which you have with such difficulty escaped.—My advice is this: Alter entirely your conduct towards your slaves; scorn not those who demand justice and mercy; treat them with much more indulgence, and sometimes with kindness; for certainly that man is in a most miserable as well as dangerous situation, who lives among those who rejoice in his sickness, howl with despair at his recovery, and whose only hope of tranquillity lies in their own death or in his.

The physician having made this remonstrance, took his leave. Zeluco remained musing for a considerable time after he was gone; the result of his reflections was a determination to behave with more indulgence to his slaves, being alarmed by what was suggested, and convinced that such conduct in future was highly expedient for his own personal security. Those resolutions were however very imperfectly kept. Indeed, Zeluco had already given so very bad an impression of his character, that a much more thorough reformation must have been continued a long time before it could answer the purpose of recovering the good opinion of the public.

Perceiving, therefore, that all intimacy with him was rather avoided, he gave over every attempt of cultivating new acquaintance; and, as it frequently happens to those who have deservedly forfeited the public esteem, he endeavored to indemnify himself for the loss of character and the want of respectable society, by an unbounded indulgence in sensual pleasure, and the company of a few dependents; to which he added the contemplation of accumulating wealth, which indeed was the only mental enjoyment he had, as well as the only cause of his remaining out of Europe; for, according to the custom of money-makers, he had set his heart on a particular sum, and was resolved not to quit the superintendence of his own affairs till he had acquired it, after which he proposed to pass the rest of his life in uninterrupted enjoyment.

In this manner, therefore, Zeluco spent a few more miserable years in the West Indies; miserable surely they must have been, for what bodily gratifications, what accumulation of riches, could prevent that man from being wretched, whom no one approached that could avoid it, whom no one served but through fear, and who was conscious of being the object of the hatred and execration of all who knew him?

Fatigued and jaded by a life of comfortless voluptuousness, and finding a favorable opportunity of disposing of an estate he had purchased to great advantage in the island of Hispaniola, as well as a considerable part of his estate in Cuba, he granted a lease of the remainder, settled his affairs, remitted his money to Europe, and prepared to return to his native country, in expectation that his wealth would procure him there that happiness which he found it unable to produce in the West Indies. But before he finally left this part of the world, he resolved to settle an account, which, in his own vengeful heart, he thought he justly owed to his neighbor, the Portuguese merchant.

CHAPTER XIX.

Perfidy and Revenge.

IN giving an account of Zeluco's adventure with the Portuguese merchant, it was remarked, that he slipped out of his own house and returned unobserved by his wife or any other person. With like caution he ever after abstained from mentioning what had happened.

When it became publicly known that Zeluco had been stabbed, the Portuguese expressed equal surprise, and rather

more concern than other people, and was exceedingly attentive in sending messages of inquiry about his health.

One of Zeluco's slaves having run away the same evening on which his master was stabbed, it was generally believed that this slave had done the deed. Zeluco himself encouraged that report, and, for obvious reasons, discouraged all pursuit or search for the fugitive. He had no doubt, however, that the real perpetrator of the fact was the Portuguese; and strongly suspected that the wife was an accomplice. On his recovery, however, he thanked his Portuguese neighbor with the most satisfied air imaginable for his obliging inquiries, and despatched with every appearance of conviction on the treachery and ingratitude of the fugitive slave who had so basely attempted to murder him.

No man was ever more ready to forget a good office done to him than Zeluco, and none ever more tenaciously remembered an injury: these opposite turns of disposition generally go together.

While Zeluco carefully concealed his suspicions within his own breast, he determined to act as if these suspicions amounted to certainty, and to be fully revenged of both the husband and wife. He saw, however, that it behoved him to act with great circumspection, and it was not easy to form what he considered as a suitable plan of revenge; for, whatever concern the Portuguese had seemed to take in the health of Zeluco, he did not carry his dissimulation the length of renewing their intimacy. His wife, likewise, observed the utmost reserve towards Zeluco, giving him no opportunity of demanding an explanation of what was past, or of renewing the intrigue.

She had not proved with child during the first two years of her marriage, but in the course of that in which her adventure with Zeluco took place, she bore a son. As the husband had been uncommonly anxious to have children, his impatience on that head had made him almost despair of ever having any. His joy on the happy event was equal to his former uneasiness, and his fondness for his wife was redoubled by his satisfaction in being a father; while the augmented attention which he paid her, joined to the natural affection she felt for her child, operated a favorable alteration in her character, and confirmed her virtuous resolutions.

Zeluco understood, with redoubled wrath and malignity, that two people he mortally hated lived with mutual confidence, and in the happiest union. Sometimes he had the mortification of hearing them quoted as a striking example of parental affection and conjugal felicity. He at length founded his scheme of revenge on a knowledge of these circumstances, and resolved to attack their happiness in its source.

By a few presents, and the intervention of his valet, he gained the maid of the Portuguese; and without exactly explaining what his views were, he prevailed on her to be subservient to them.

He was informed by the girl, that the nurse sometimes carried the child to a shady seat at a small distance from her master's house. Zeluco passed that way one day, when he knew of the Portuguese and his lady being elsewhere. He expressed the greatest joy at the sight of the child; took it in his arms, and fondled it with every appearance of the tender affection. He earnestly and repeatedly begged of the nurse to be exceedingly careful of the sweet infant, presented her with a purse of gold as a reward for her past care, and promised her another in due time, provided she persevered in her tenderness. He earnestly entreated the woman not to mention what had passed to her master; and taking his leave with seeming reluctance, entreated her to return to the same place with the child as often as she should know that her master was absent, or engaged with company. He had several interviews of the same kind in the same place within the space of a month.

Whatever reflections occurred to the nurse on these secret visits, and his extraordinary affection for the child, she kept a prudent silence, and hoarded them carefully within her breast, as a precious fund to be expended among her particular friends and gossip on future occasions.

Zeluco at length arranged matters so that the lady and her maid approached the place while he was caressing the child; and as soon as he was satisfied that they observed him, he delivered the infant with precipitation into the nurse's arms and retired.

The lady, greatly surprised at what she had seen, questioned the nurse; who with some hesitation (as the maid was present) told her all that passed, without suppressing a circumstance, except that of her having received the purse.

The lady was more and more at a loss what construction to put on so strange and unlooked-for an incident.—She asked the nurse, whether she had ever mentioned this matter to her master?

No, never: I do assure your ladyship I never did, replied the nurse with earnestness.

I do not know why you should not, said the mistress, with affected unconcern; as there seems something a little extraordinary in this man's taking so much notice of the child, I think it would be proper that my husband should be informed of it.

Lord, madam, said the maid, who was instructed to prevent this, if the nurse were to inform my master of all those who caress and seem fond of the child, she could do nothing else;—every mortal is struck with his beauty; and Signor Zeluco, in admiring and caressing him, does no more than others. To mention him in particular to my master would seem exceedingly odd. The mistress seeming still to balance whether it would not be her safest course to acquaint her husband—the maid continued: I will refer it to the nurse, if any body could ever look on the child without admiration.—The nurse declared that nobody ever could.—Only look at him yourself, madam, continued the maid; observe how like

an angel he smiles. Can you be uneasy, or think it extraordinary, that all the world should admire and wish to caress such a delightful creature?

The mother, whose eyes were fixed on the child during this harangue, thought, as she gazed, that the incident which had given her uneasiness was less extraordinary than she at first imagined; and at length allowed herself to believe, that it was very natural for Zeluco, or any other person, to behave as he had done.

Let those who are ready to accuse this poor woman of excessive weakness, remember that she was a mother, and that the infant, though far from being handsome, was her first-born and only child.

Yet as she is represented as not deficient in quickness of thought and clearness of understanding, she may be thought to have acted inconsistently with this character, in attempting to conceal from her husband what he was so likely to come to the knowledge of, from the babbling propensity natural to nurses and maids. If I am not mistaken, however, the sex in general are apt to shrink from present inconveniences, even when sensible that by encountering them they would obviate the risk of future misfortunes. The lady was certain that the knowledge of Zeluco's secret visits to the child would throw her husband into immediate ill-humor, and awaken very disagreeable reflections in his mind. She flattered herself, that he might never hear a word of the matter, and she could not bear to disturb the present calm to secure herself from a future storm, which possibly might never occur. In behaving as she did in this particular, she will be kept in countenance by many who act on the same principles in matters of far greater importance; but she seems to have been entirely forsaken by her natural sagacity, when she anxiously enjoined the nurse and her own maid to conceal what had happened from her husband. For it required but a superficial glance of their dispositions to perceive, that this was giving them an additional incitement to reveal it.

She was probably tempted to this inconsiderate step, by the knowledge she had that Zeluco was soon to return to Europe; and she lost no time in persuading her husband to remove with his family to his house in town, that Zeluco might not be tempted to seek another interview; and she resolved to keep herself and the child sequestered from any chance of meeting him before his departure from the island.

Zeluco being informed of these circumstances by the maid, who, on the pretence of some necessary arrangements, remained one day after the departure of her master and mistress; he, in prosecution of his base scheme, gave her a letter, which he desired her to place in such a situation as to be observed by the former, and seemed to have dropped from the latter. When the maid joined the family in town, she executed these orders with but too much dexterity. While she stood behind her mistress, who was writing, the husband entered the room a little abruptly, and told his wife that somebody wished to speak to her in the parlor. She immediately locked up her papers into a small writing-desk, and withdrew. As she rose, the maid took that opportunity of dropping the letter she had received from Zeluco, beneath the seat her mistress was quitting, and immediately followed her out of the room. The husband picked up the letter, which was unsealed, rumpled, addressed to his wife, and conceived in the following terms:

"It is impossible for me, my dearest soul, to express the happiness I have enjoyed in seeing and caressing the sweet pledge of our mutual love; I shall never forget your kind attention, in directing the nurse to the spot where I had that delicious enjoyment. I must, however, acquiesce in the prudence of your determination, to persuade your tyrant to move for some time to his house in town, where an interview may be arranged with less danger, and I shall wait with as much patience as I am able for that happy moment."

P. S. I continue to disguise my writing, and earnestly recommend to you the same precaution."

The astonishment and rage of the Portuguese on reading this may be easily imagined than described; seizing his wife's writing-desk, which stood upon a table, he carried it into his own apartment, and there read over and over the fatal scroll which filled his heart with anguish. Notwithstanding the disguise of the writing, he easily distinguished it to be that of Zeluco,—which left him no doubt of his wife's infidelity. The first violence of his wrath and indignation might have proved fatal to her, had it not been damped and counteracted, in some measure, by the grief and dejection he felt, that the child he so dearly loved, and had been so proud of, might not be his own, but the offspring of his detested enemy.

The impression of sorrow, from whatever cause it is derived, mollifies the violence of rage; and the conflict of those opposite sentiments in the present instance repressed a little the madness of the husband's fury. However convinced he was of his wife's guilt, he could not be certain that the child was not his own; and all his rage against the mother could not unloose the bonds of affection which nature and the child's infantine endearments had twined around his heart.

Hearing the voice of the nurse and the maid in the passage, he called them into his apartment, and shutting the door, he, with as much serenity as he could assume, questioned the nurse, whether any man was in the use of accosting her at a particular place which he named, and of caressing the child.

The woman denied that any such thing had ever happened.

Be sure, woman, that you speak truth, said the Portuguese.

I would not depart from the truth, said the nurse, for all the gold in Mexico.

The Portuguese repeated the question, and the nurse gave the same answer.

Thou abominable wretch, cried he, I have certain information of the contrary; and nothing but an avowal of the truth shall save thee from punishment here, and a long expiation in purgatory hereafter!

I have told the truth, said the woman, hesitating with conscious falsehood.

The Portuguese, with augmented rage and repeated threats, continued to question her.

She at length acknowledged, that Signor Zeluco had several times met her at the place he mentioned, and had shown great fondness for the child.

Wretch! cried the enraged Portuguese; why did you deny this?

The nurse was silent.

What harm did you imagine there was in that man's seeing and caressing the child?

No harm in the wide world, said the nurse; for if there had been any harm I should never have permitted it.

Wherefore then did you conceal it from me? and wherefore did you so solemnly deny it just now?

The confounded woman finding herself so hard beset, and quite unable to extricate herself by prevarication, acknowledged that she had concealed it from him at the request of her mistress.

I suspected as much, cried the husband.

But my mistress, interrupted the maid, desired her to conceal it for no other reason but merely that your honor might be saved the uneasiness of hearing that another man was in the practice of caressing and showing such paternal affection to your child.

The wrath of the Portuguese, which had been for some time glowing, was so instantaneously kindled by this suggestion, that he struck the maid an unmanly blow on the face, so that the blood gushed from her nose and mouth; in which condition she ran to her mistress, who was just returned to her own apartment.

The poor woman was exceedingly terrified at her husband's violence, and her fear was not diminished when she understood the cause of it. She was now sensible of her imprudence, in concealing from her husband Zeluco's treacherous visits to her child, and in depending on the discretion or fidelity of servants. She knew nothing however of the letter, and imagined that her husband's ill-humor proceeded solely from his hearing of Zeluco's behavior. She thought her best course was to explain the whole to him without further delay.

She flew into his apartment, assured him that the information which displeased him had given still more vexation to her, and that when the nurse acquainted her with it, her own first impulse had been to mention it directly to him; that she sincerely repented her not having done so, for she was now convinced that a virtuous woman should have no secrets concealed from her husband.

The Portuguese, who had listened hitherto with a stern countenance, burst into a laugh, which, forcing its way through features distorted with anger and the thoughts of vengeance, chilled his wife with horror. She proceeded in a confused manner to assure him, that however improper it was not to acquaint him with what the nurse told him, she had refrained for no other reason than to save him uneasiness.

Your faithful confidant and you adhere I find to the same story, and are both equally tender of giving me uneasiness, said the Portuguese, renewing his frightful laugh; but be assured, faithless woman, that you shall not deceive me twice, and that your punishment, if possible, shall equal your guilt.

What guilt? Alas! I know no guilt, cried the trembling woman; I am innocent as the babe newly born.

Before you have the effrontery to speak of innocence, you should learn to be more careful of your letters—look at this, cried he, holding the letter open before her eyes.

Holy Virgin! cried the astonished woman, as she perused the letter; I never saw this paper before,—it is a forgery of the villain's to deceive you and ruin me.

How came this forgery of the villain's to drop out of your pocket? said the husband,

It assuredly dropped not out of my pocket, replied she; for as I hope for mercy from heaven I never saw the paper before.

No, never; to be sure, said the husband, with a ghastly sneer: You—you are innocent as the babe newly born.

I am indeed, exclaimed the wife; and when you have patience and coolness to examine the whole matter, you will find so.

What examination is necessary? cried he: what confirmation can be added to such a letter as this?—this infallible evidence of your shame!

That letter is an evidence of nothing, but of the mean revenge of a disappointed villain. I beseech you, therefore, added she, laying hold of his arm; I earnestly beseech you, for the sake of your child, for your—Think not, interrupted he, shaking off her hand, to deceive me again;—be gone to your chamber, and repent, for be assured that I will have ample revenge. So saying, he thrust her rudely out of the room, and shut the door with violence. She was put to bed, and passed the rest of the day and the whole night in anxiety and terror.

CHAPTER XX.

Unjust accusations seldom affect us much, but from some justice in them.

As soon as he was alone, the husband broke open her writing-desk; but after a very strict scrutiny he found nothing to justify the insinuations of the letter, or in the smallest degree to confirm his suspicions.—But what confirmation is needed, said he, of her criminal connexion with this man?—why should he wish to see the child in a clandestine manner?—why did she order the nurse to conceal this from me?—And, above all, this letter, in which he has in vain attempted to disguise his

hand-writing, must have fallen from her pocket!—O! her guilt is manifest.

In reflections of this nature, and in forming plans of vengeance, the Portuguese passed as sleepless a night as his lady.

The following day she was so ill that she kept her bed: the husband had not once to inquire for her, nor did he send any message: he also kept his apartment, and was heard walking backwards and forwards with a hurried pace the whole of that day. The next forenoon the physician who had formerly attended Zeluco called accidentally, and was taken immediately to see the lady, one of the servants having informed him she was indisposed.

As she had the greatest confidence in the doctor's good sense and prudence, and knew also that her husband had a very high opinion of him, she informed him of the true cause of her illness—Zeluco's visits to the child; her own imprudence in ordering the nurse to conceal them; of his hearing of them; his jealousy thereupon, and of the horrid anonymous letter.

The first thing that struck the physician in her narrative was, that no motive was assigned for the base scheme the lady imputed to Zeluco: he hinted this to her.

She said, it must have proceeded from the natural malice of the man's wicked heart; she knew of no other motive.

The physician observed, that it was hardly credible that any man would form such a shocking scheme without some more particular cause.

The lady, perceiving the force of this remark, thought herself obliged to mention her first connection with Zeluco; although that was a subject on which she never thought without pain. She could not help however giving as favorable a gloss to her story as possible, by declaring, that Zeluco had formerly had the insolence to make love to her; that no woman was safe from an insult of this nature; yet, as it is generally imagined that men seldom make such declarations but where they have reason to hope they will be well received, she had naturally wished to conceal this incident, though she had heard his wicked proposal with equal surprise and horror; and had, in consequence of his persevering, been obliged to acquit her husband; and, finally, she now suspected that the pride of the man, hurt by her resistance, so different from what he was accustomed to, had prompted him to this diabolical scheme on purpose to ruin her.

It is evident that in this narrative the lady did not adhere exactly to the truth, but thought proper to sink the circumstance of her having at first agreed to meet Zeluco. If all those forgive her for this part of her conduct, who, in relating facts in which themselves are concerned, are apt to leave out what makes against them, and put in the most conspicuous point of view whatever is in their favor, it is to be presumed that the Portuguese lady will not be censured by a vast number of our readers.

The physician, it is probable, made allowance for a bias so very general among men, and from which the fair sex themselves are not entirely free.

After inquiring very minutely into every circumstance, his suspicion fixed strongly on the maid as an agent of Zeluco's. On his hinting this to the lady, she declared, that of all her family this girl was the last she could suspect; because she had always displayed the most unbounded attachment to herself, and often expressed, particularly of late, an aversion to Zeluco.

This did not weaken the physician's suspicions. Poor girl, continued the mistress, she is of a delicate constitution, and subject to hysterical fits; she was much terrified by my husband's treatment of herself, but still more on seeing me so ill. I happened to say that I feared it would kill me; on which she was seized with a violent trembling, and has kept her bed ever since.

The physician asked, whether the lady had ever intrusted this maid, who seemed to be a great favorite, with any secret which it would give her uneasiness to have revealed.

The lady answered with some warmth, that she had no such secret; that she cared not if all the actions of her life were made public; that she defied the power of malice;—and thus she ran on with a zeal and fluency natural to people who are endeavoring to justify themselves, and are conscious of not being entirely innocent; she concluded by asserting, that there was no part of her conduct she wished hid from the world.

The physician having waited till, being out of breath, she stopped, he then calmly observed, that his question was not of so extensive a nature as she seemed to imagine; that he was not so impertinent as to inquire whether she had ever done what she wished to conceal from the world, but only whether her maid was acquainted with any thing of that nature.

Certainly not, said the lady; since I am not myself conscious of any such secret, how is it possible that my maid could be acquainted with it?—I admire the acuteness and logical precision with which you reason, madam, said the doctor; but I should be glad to know whether this maid was in your service at the time you mention, when Signor Zeluco paid his addresses to you.

If she had, she could have known nothing of that nature, said she. Certainly not, said the doctor; but I wish to know the fact, was she or was she not? She was not, answered the lady. So much the better, resumed the doctor. I ask pardon, madam, for being so inquisitive; but I thought it of importance to have this point cleared up before I visit the maid, which I now mean to do with the view to discover, if possible, by whose means the letter was thrown upon your husband's way; if that can be traced to the person you suspect, your justification follows of course.

So saying, he left the lady, and was conducted into the maid's chamber, and left with her alone. The maid immediately inquired how her mistress was?

Your mistress is very ill indeed, replied the physician, looking at her with a penetrating eye; some monster of wickedness had been bribed to ruin that worthy woman: you know of the forged letter which was thrown in your master's way—do you not?

I have heard of such a thing, said the maid, changing color.

Have you any notion who has been guilty of such a perfidious action? said the physician, still fixing his eyes on her.

Lord, sir! how can I have any notion? replied the maid.

Could you have believed, resumed the doctor, that such a viper crawled upon the earth?

I could hardly have thought it, replied the maid, with a languid voice.

Do you not think that the vengeance of heaven will pursue the vile wretch? said the physician.

Perhaps she will repent before she dies, said the maid, trembling.

She! repeated the physician—how do you know she is a woman?

Me!—I—I know nothing;—no, nothing in the least, said the maid, in confusion; only if she is a woman, I hope she will repent before she dies.

If she is a woman, cried the physician, she is a disgrace to her sex, and the vengeance of heaven will overtake her in this life, and hell awaits her in the next, unless she confess her crime, and prevent the ruin of an innocent lady:—But how are you yourself? you seem very ill.

I am indeed not well, replied the maid. The physician, feeling her pulse, cried with a voice of surprise, good God, you are very ill indeed;—let me see your tongue.—Gracious heaven! what is this!—why, I had no idea of your being in this way.

O, dear doctor, cried the maid, do not frighten me; you do not imagine I am in danger of dying?

Danger! said the doctor; yes, assuredly; yet, perhaps, at least, I hope you still may recover—that is, provided you—in short, I will do all I can for you;—but if you have any spiritual or worldly affairs to settle, you had best set about it directly.

The doctor, having ordered her some medicines, went into the apartment of the Portuguese, whom he found alone in a very gloomy mood. He expressed satisfaction, however, at seeing the physician, who immediately told him that his lady had informed him of what had happened. Her assurance must equal her guilt, cried the Portuguese, to enable her to mention it. He then poured out a torrent of abuse against his wife. The physician did not think proper to interrupt him; but when he had done, he coolly asked what proofs he had of her guilt?

The Portuguese enumerated the circumstances of Zeluco's behavior towards the child, his wife's having instructed the nurse and maid to conceal it, and then showed him the letter.

The physician having heard him patiently, endeavored to make him sensible that all these circumstances were not sufficient to justify the inferences which he drew against a lady who had always behaved with affection to him, and the greatest tenderness to his child. Besides, added he, these circumstances, inconclusive as they are, lose much of their weight, if they can all be accounted for on the very probable supposition of their being contrived by an enemy.

The letter!—the letter!—cried the Portuguese. Well, said the doctor, the letter is of a piece with the clandestine visits; it was no difficult matter to bribe some person to throw a letter in your way in such a manner as that it would appear to have dropped from your lady. Recollect if there was any person in the room with her immediately before you observed the letter.

Nobody but her own confidential maid, said the husband. And if an enemy had formed the scheme of ruining you both in this manner, who would he think of seducing an assistant so likely as the domestic who attended her person? Consider also, continued the doctor, how very improbable it is that she would keep such a letter in her pocket.

If guilty people were always cautious, they would not be so often detected as they are, said the Portuguese.

But it is not natural to think, rejoined the doctor, that the same want of caution which made her wear a letter of this importance carelessly in her pocket, would have appeared when you examined her papers? Did you find among them any other letters to the same purpose with this?

He answered, that he had not.

This, therefore, is a fair presumption, said the doctor, that there never were any; that the letter you found was purposely thrown in your way by the direction of some person equally the enemy of you and your lady.

CHAPTER XXI.

Comfortable hints to married men.

WHILE they were conversing, the Capuchin, who had attended Hanno in his dying moments, was introduced. This venerable person was spiritual director to all the Christians, white and black, in the family. The Portuguese immediately ordered, as was his custom, some cold victuals and a large flask of wine to be set before the father, who had only time to drink a few glasses, when a message came from the sick maid, who earnestly wished to see him. He was rising with reluctance from his repast, when the physician begged his delay for a moment; and taking the Portuguese to a corner of the room, he, in a few words, explained his intention; which the other, on whom the doctor's arguments had already made some impression, having approved, they turned to the father, who in this interval had finished his flask of wine. The doctor then informed him, that a very unfortunate affair had happened, in which he might be of service; that in short a discovery had been made, that the lady of the house had been

unfaithful to her husband, as was proved by a letter from her lover, which she had dropped; that a plan was already formed for punishing her in an exemplary manner; that in the meantime she was kept in confinement till endeavors were made to discover those who had assisted in carrying on the correspondence with her lover, as there was reason to think she had been assisted by some person in the family.

The Capuchin, who was a little warmed with wine, and who valued himself greatly on his eloquence, and on the happy talent he thought he possessed of consoling the afflicted, could not allow so fair an occasion of displaying it to slip unimproved: addressing himself therefore to the Portuguese, he expressed his concern for the misfortune which had happened to him, observing at the same time, that however painful it might be, his case was by no means uncommon; for that a large proportion of husbands labored under the same calamity. Not, continued he, that I mean to insinuate that my worthy friend, less a cuckold than if you were the only one upon earth. I only mention this circumstance, because, although not much to the honor of human nature, yet there is reason to think that mankind in general derive consolation from the thoughts of others being in the same disagreeable situation with themselves. I therefore assure you, that even among my acquaintance there are many, some of them very respectable gentlemen, to whom the same accident has happened that there is so much reason to think has befallen you, notwithstanding which they live as easy and comfortably as they did before; this depends entirely on people's way of thinking. Things of this kind are undoubtedly rather unpleasant at first; but when we are accustomed to them, they give little or no uneasiness; for habit reconciles us to any thing.

The Capuchin was a man of influence in the island; and the Portuguese, who had been, although unjustly, accused of Judaism, had more reasons than one for wishing to keep on good terms with him; yet he could not help betraying his impatience at the reverend father's manner of comforting him, by a most agonizing contortion of countenance at the last observation; which the other observing, he added, I perceive, sir, that you do not bear this dispensation with the resignation you ought; I must therefore desire that you will keep in your remembrance, that it has been undoubtedly permitted for some wise purpose; it will therefore be as impious as unavailing for you to murmur, for what has happened admits of no remedy. Now that the thing is done, it cannot be undone, at least I never yet heard of any method by which a man can be uncuckolded; this, my valuable friend, is the peculiar cruelty of your case; another person commits the crime, and you who are innocent suffer the shame. And what is still more vexatious, although one wicked woman can place her husband in this odious state, all the virtuous women on earth cannot take him out of it. I beg you will further observe— Here the eloquent father was interrupted in the middle of his harangue by another message from the maid; and was with some difficulty prevailed on by the physician to go directly, without waiting to finish his discourse.

When he was gone, the physician remarked to the Portuguese, that in the present state of the maid's mind she would probably confess every thing she knew to the father, and was impatient to see him for that very purpose; that although the Capuchin was bound not to mention what was revealed to him in confession, yet there would be no great difficulty in gathering from him, particularly in his present trim, the import of all the maid should say, without his intending to inform them of a title.

The physician was right in his conjecture. The maid, terrified with the idea of immediate death, made a confession of her sins to the priest, and particularly acknowledged that she had been prevailed on by Zeluco's valet, to throw under the chair of her mistress a paper which he gave her, and which she now, to her great affliction, understood had produced the most mischievous consequences to her mistress; but the import of which she did not fully understand at the time; otherwise, she added, in alleviation of her conduct, she would not have been necessary to so great a crime.

The priest, although not the clearest-headed of his profession, had understanding enough to tell her, that the best reparation she could make was by a full avowal of this to her master, and he refused to give her absolution on any other conditions. On the maid's consenting to this, the father returned to the Portuguese, whom he found in his apartment with the doctor; and addressing himself to the former, he begged that he would attend him to the maid, who had something of the last importance to communicate.

They went accordingly, accompanied by the physician. The maid, with a flood of tears, and the most earnest supplications to her master for his forgiveness, made an avowal of what she had told the priest: confessing at the same time, that she had prevented her mistress from informing him of Zeluco's interviews with the child, which was her intention the moment she was informed of them; and this the maid owned she had done at the desire of the same valet who had given her the paper.

The Portuguese with difficulty restrained his indignation against the woman; at length, however, he was prevailed on to say he forgave her, and immediately desired to see the nurse. When she appeared, he asked in what manner his wife had expressed herself when first she was informed of Zeluco's behavior to the child. The nurse naturally, and without hesitation, declared that her mistress had insisted on her husband's being informed directly, but was dissuaded from that measure by the maid.

After a few more questions, being fully convinced of his wife's innocence, he repaired, along with the priest and the physician, to the apartment in which she was confined;—apologized in the most earnest manner for the ill-treatment

she had received; begged her forgiveness for the suspicions he had harbored; declared his perfect confidence in her virtue, which, he added, it should never again be in the power of villany or malice to shake.

CHAPTER XXII.

"— He
Compounds for sins he was inclined to,
By damning those he had no mind to."

Butler.

THE lady behaved with the utmost propriety on the occasion; throwing the whole blame on the villain who had woven such an artful net of circumstances as might have caught the belief of the least suspicious of husbands.

Dear! shall he pay for his villany, said the Portuguese.
Leave him to the torments of his own conscience, rejoined his wife.

In case his conscience should not torment him sufficiently, said the father, the deficiency will be amply made up to him before he gets out of purgatory.

The physician then drew the father out of the room, thinking the husband and wife would complete their reconciliation in the most satisfactory manner by themselves. He told them, however, as he retired, that he would have the pleasure of dining with them, and then walked with the priest into the garden, where he remained till dinner was announced.

His view in remaining was to endeavor to turn the Portuguese from thoughts of revenge, which he suspected to be brooding in his breast.

Being left alone with him after they had dined, he observed, that however strongly he was convinced of Zeluco's being the writer of the letter, yet as he had had the precaution to disguise his hand-writing, it would be fruitless to found any legal prosecution upon that circumstance.

I despise all legal prosecution, cried the Portuguese; but I will find means of doing myself justice without any such tedious and uncertain process. The physician apprehending that he meant to challenge him, represented that as a most absurd and uncertain method of repairing an injury; and the Portuguese, who had no such plan in his head, listened calmly to his arguments, and at length seemed to be convinced by their force, on purpose to deceive the physician, and prevent his suspecting the real design he had in view.

In a short time Zeluco was informed that the base train he had laid for the ruin of the Portuguese and his lady, with every circumstance of his perfidious conduct, was discovered by the husband; and although the particular cause of their misunderstanding was not publicly known, yet he was told that it had been whispered about, that he was hurrying out of the island to avoid the resentment of the merchant.

This rumor determined him to postpone his voyage for some time, that he might give his enemy an opportunity of calling him to the field if he chose it; or in case he did not, that the world might be convinced that Zeluco himself was not afraid to give him that species of satisfaction.

It appears in the course of this narrative that Zeluco, however defective he was in other virtues, possessed a considerable share of constitutional intrepidity. In the early part of his life, from sheer vanity, he had often than once courted opportunities of distinguishing himself by a duel; and through the whole of his life he showed, that whatever injustice or wickedness he was tempted to commit, he had also sufficient firmness to justify, if he thought that measure expedient; or to fight any person who accused him when he thought proper to deny it. Courage was indeed the sole virtue he admired in others, and the only one he possessed himself. It has been often said, that cowards only are cruel; but although it is natural to think, and observation will justify the opinion, that they are more apt to be so than the intrepid, yet there are but too many proofs that one of the most respectable and brilliant qualities which can adorn the character of man, is sometimes united to the most odious that can disgrace humanity, and that courage is not incompatible with cruelty.

Of this Zeluco was a striking example; and the same person who with little regret had forfeited the good opinion of every virtuous mind, could not brook to have it thought that he feared the resentment of the man he was conscious of having injured, or that he would make any apology to him, rather than run the risk of injuring him in a more violent manner.

In the mean time the suspicions of the physician were not entirely removed by the dissimulation of the Portuguese. Notwithstanding the latter's declining to seek legal or honorable redress from Zeluco, the doctor perceived something in his manner, which gave him the impression that the Portuguese meditated a less justifiable measure than either: his benevolence inclined him to prevent what his sagacity and knowledge of the man's character led him to suspect. His suspicion was confirmed a very short time after by the merchant's wife, who, under pretence of being indisposed, sent him a very urgent message to come and see her. With perturbation of mind she told him, that she had reason to dread that her husband had formed a very criminal project of being revenged on Zeluco, and watched an opportunity of putting it in execution. She was prompted to this step by no regard for Zeluco, but from a horror at the intended deed, and from anxiety for her husband; adding, that she was afraid of displaying much concern, partly because she did not wish that he should know of her being suspicious of what he intended, and partly that she might not awaken the jealous disposition of her husband:—with tears in her eyes, therefore, she entreated the doctor to exert all his influence to turn her husband from such an unjustifiable design; or, if he failed, to use such means as his own prudence could suggest to render it ineffectual.

The good doctor applauded her conduct, and seized the

earliest proper opportunity of renewing the subject, which he had once before touched on to the Portuguese; adding, that he feared he still harbored vindictive intentions against Zeluco; representing the danger of such a scheme; that, however cautiously it might be executed, he would infallibly be considered as the perpetrator. I know no other reason which you can have for suspecting that I harbor such intentions, said the Portuguese, but your thinking it impossible, after what you know of this man's behavior, that it should be otherwise.

You are mistaken, replied the physician; I think it ought to be otherwise; and this is not my reason for harboring suspicions.

I do not tell you, said the Portuguese, that your suspicions are well or ill-founded; but could you be surprised if it were as you suspect?

Nor shall I be surprised, rejoined the doctor, if you are convicted and executed for gratifying your revenge in such an unjustifiable manner. Come, come, sir, added he, allow yourself to be guided by reason, and not impelled by passion, in this matter: consider what a dreadful situation your wife and child will be in, should any misfortune befall you in consequence of such an attempt. The wisest plan you can follow, since this man is on the point of leaving the island, is to let him go in safety, and it is probable you will never see him more. Here the Portuguese shook his head. Then, sir, resumed the doctor, your next best measure is to challenge him honorably. What right has a man who has acted so perfidiously to expect that he is to be so dealt with? said the Portuguese. None, replied the doctor; but were I in your place, I should be more solicitous about what was reputable for myself, than about what my enemy had a right to expect. I only hinted this as being of two evils the least; and the best arguments that can be made use of to one who despises the Christian religion.

I do not understand you! What do you mean? said the Portuguese.—Why, that you are in that predicament, answered the physician.

Who! I despise the Christian religion! cried the Portuguese, in terror and amazement.

You seem at least to despise one of its most important precepts, said the physician; from which it may naturally be concluded, that you have no great respect for the rest.

I do not comprehend what you mean, rejoined the Portuguese.

Yet I have expressed my meaning very plainly, said the physician; I really do not think you can with propriety be called a Christian.

Jesus Maria! exclaimed the Portuguese, you fill me with horror! Why, sir, I take the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, with St. Joseph her husband, St. James, and all the host of heaven, to witness, that I attend mass regularly, and have always from my infancy believed in every article of faith which our holy mother church requires; and I am ready to believe twice as much whenever she is pleased to exact it: if this is not being a Christian, I should be glad to know what is.

Nay, my good friend, resumed the physician, it is a matter of indifference to me what you do or do not believe; I am not, I thank God, your or any man's father confessor: but if you understood the *spirit* of the Christian religion half as well as you believe what the church exacts, you will find that your attending mass, and all your faith into the bargain, will not make you a Christian, while you indulge such a violent spirit of revenge.

As for that, replied the Portuguese, neither the church nor the Christian religion have any thing to do with it; that is my affair, and depends on my private feelings; and it is impossible for me ever to forgive a villain who attempted to injure me.

It is because he attempted to injure you, that it is in your power as a man, and your duty as a Christian, to forgive him. Had he never injured you, nor even attempted it, continued the doctor, it would indeed be impossible for you to have the merit of forgiving him.

It will naturally be imagined, from the vindictive character of this Portuguese, that he was a hypocrite, and pretended to more faith than he really had; but this was not the case. It never had occurred to his mind, that there could be any doubt of the truth of those tenets in which his father and mother had instructed him, and which he heard venerable-looking men in sacred habits proclaim from all the pulpits of Lisbon. He was decidedly of opinion that none but monsters of wickedness, who ought to be burned in this world by way of preparing them for the next, could harbor any doubts on such important points; he had indeed occasionally heard it hinted that some of those doctrines were incomprehensible, and others contradictory; but this did not convey to his judgment any reason for doubting of their truth. He never omitted, therefore, any of the ceremonies prescribed by the church: he confessed his sins regularly, performed penance faithfully, would not eat a morsel of meat on a Friday on any consideration; and with the most punctual perseverance repeated daily his Pater Noster, Ave Maria, and Credo, to the last bead of his rosary. A person who thought that the whole of Christianity consisted in these and other ceremonies, could not but be surprised and shocked to hear his claim to the name of a Christian disputed. As to that threat for revenge on every real or imaginary injury, which he had indulged from his childhood, and some other culpable propensities to which he was addicted, he considered all of these as venial foibles, which were more than expiated by his obedience to mother church in more essential points; and when his indulging in those culpable practices, to which he was by temper or constitution prone, came in question, he shrugged his shoulders, and said, Well, I thank God, they are neither heresy nor schism.

The physician, however, endeavored to give him a different notion of these matters, founding most of his arguments on passages of a sermon, to be found in the gospel of St. Matthew; for this happened to be a physician who sometimes read the bible: there are, it would appear, some of that kind in America. The Portuguese, at first, thought the passages in question of a very singular nature; and as they were plain and intelligible, and contained nothing mysterious, he could hardly believe that they were quite orthodox: besides, he was a good deal surprised that certain articles which he thought of great importance were not touched upon: yet on being informed who the person was who had preached this sermon, he could not deny that it had a fair chance of being sound Christianity. The physician having brought him so far, found little difficulty in persuading him that it was his duty as well as interest to leave Zeluco to his own wicked heart, which carried its punishment within itself; hinting also the probability of his falling sooner or later within the grasp of the laws of society, which his passions continually tempted him to violate.

It was probably owing to the remonstrances of this extraordinary physician that Zeluco left the island in safety, and the Portuguese merchant was indebted to him for being freed from the two most tormenting demons that can possess the human heart, jealousy and the spirit of revenge.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"To whom can riches give reprieve and trust,
Content and pleasure, but the good and just?
Judges and senators have been bought for gold;
Esteem and love were never to be sold."

Pope.

WHEN it was evident that the Portuguese had no intention of calling Zeluco to account for his base behavior, he publicly announced the time of his departure from the Havannah; and having freighted a vessel entirely for his own use, after a prosperous voyage he arrived at Cadiz, where he was detained for some time, but as soon as he had transacted his business, he proceeded to Sicily.

Soon after his arrival at Palermo, Zeluco furnished a house expensively, and began to live in a most magnificent style; inviting every person of distinction to his table, and entertaining in the most sumptuous manner. This way of living, with the idea universally entertained of his great riches, soon acquired him a numerous acquaintance and the warmest professions of attachment.

Zeluco, who had never known any motive of action but self-interest, was not deceived by such professions; but while he plumed himself on account of his superior penetration, he was the dupe of his own maxims, which, being drawn from the feelings of a corrupted heart, were often erroneous.

Insensible himself to the ardor of friendship, he thought there was no such sentiment, and most certainly never had a friend. What the world calls friendship, in his opinion was merely a compact of convenience or interest between a class of people, in which it was tacitly agreed, that when, by the loss of fortune, health, or otherwise, any individual of the association became useless to the rest, all further connexion with that person terminated of course.

Had Zeluco been satisfied with thinking this was *often* the case, he would have been in the right; but he was convinced it was *always* so, and there he was wrong: all declarations of attachment and friendship, therefore, he viewed as indirect attacks upon his purse; the punctual attention paid to his invitations, he rightly considered as nothing else than a proof of the excellency of his cook, and of the superior flavor of his wine.

The favorable notion which he entertained of the symmetry and beauty of his own person and face, inclined him however to believe, that the partiality which several of the ladies displayed towards him was void of hypocrisy, and proceeded from sincere personal attachment. For Zeluco had no sooner returned to Palermo than he became an object of great attention, and sometimes a subject of controversy among the ladies.

The elegant turn of his person and the graces of his countenance were universally admired, and even his character and disposition were favorably thought of, from that common trick of the fancy which gives the head and heart as much sense and virtue as the face has beauty. But he had not remained long at Palermo ere his real character began to develop itself; and then the graces of his countenance were called in question, and his features were said to convey an idea of malevolence, or even atrocity:—this happened from another play of fancy, which transfers the deformity of the mind into the face.

Pleased with the attention paid him by the men, and the favor of some of the women, he passed his time less disagreeably than he had done in the West Indies. But the degree of popularity which he had obtained at his arrival gradually diminished; his temper, naturally insolent and overbearing, detached the most respectable of the men from his society; and the intolerable caprice of his disposition, joined to a continual jealousy of temper, rendered him at last odious to the women. He therefore with great satisfaction embraced a proposal made by a Sicilian nobleman, more distinguished by rank than character, of accompanying him to Naples.

In that gay city he immediately set up a still more splendid domestic establishment than he had at Palermo; and as he played deep, and with apparent inattention, he was considered as a valuable acquisition by some very fashionable societies.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"The frail one's advocate, the weak one's friend." Pope.

Soon after his arrival, he was presented to Signora Sporna. This lady was the widow of a Neapolitan nobleman, one of

the poorest of a class of men in which few are rich. He had lived for two years after his marriage in a degree of magnificence more suitable to his rank than fortune, and died very opportunely when he had nothing left to live upon.

As, contrary to the advice of her friends, she had relinquished great part of the funds appropriated for the security of her own jointure, to relieve her husband's difficulties, she had nothing to support her after his death but the revenue arising from the small part which remained, and a very moderate pension granted to her by the court.

She lived however in a decent, not to say a genteel style, which was the more surprising, because, although her husband had left no money to maintain her, yet he contrived to leave a child by another woman for her to maintain.

Signora Sporza was not acquainted with this circumstance till several months after her husband's death, when she was informed of it by the mother, who was then in a starving condition, and who, as the wretched woman herself expressed it, would not have applied to her for relief, had she not been driven by compassion for her infant more than for herself.

Those same relations who had advised Signora Sporza not to relinquish any part of what was secured by marriage articles to herself, for the sake of an extravagant husband, exclaimed against the indecency and folly of her supporting an adulterous bastard and its wicked mother; they insisted upon it, that she, of all women, had the least call to take such a load upon her. All the answer which Signora Sporza made to these exclamations and arguments, was desiring them to find out some other woman or man, if they pleased, who would maintain the unhappy woman and her child, in which event she was willing to yield up her claim. Till that is done, added she, however indecent it may seem, I must be assisted in this folly.

She accordingly took both the mother and child into her house, where, contrary to the prediction of her relations, that the two serpents she was taking into her bosom would certainly sting her, they greatly contributed to her happiness; for the wicked woman became a most grateful and serviceable domestic, and Signora Sporza grew as fond of the child, who was a very sprightly boy, as if he had been her own.

This lady was of a character which rendered her universally agreeable; she supported the inconveniences of very narrow circumstances with so much gaiety and good-humor, understood the art of arranging her parties so judiciously, and animated them with such pleasantry, that her assemblies were thought the most agreeable though the least splendid in Naples. As she was well received every where, and her house frequented by the most fashionable company, Zeluco thought it worth his while to cultivate her acquaintance, and he was for some time a pretty constant attendant at her assemblies. One circumstance, however, made him less so than otherwise he would have been; the play in general was not so deep as in many other assemblies, owing to Signora Sporza's discouraging it as much as she easily could. Independent of more permanent ill consequences, she declared an aversion to deep play on account of the immediate gloom with which it overspread every countenance engaged in it, to the entire destruction of all good-humor, and pleasantry. But Zeluco had a greater relish for deep play than for either good-humor or pleasantry; and as he sometimes met at Signora Sporza's with people of the same turn of mind, they were apt to indulge their humor in spite of her remonstrances, which indeed, however seriously meant, were always jocularly made.

Among the British subjects at this time at Naples, there were two young Englishmen, Mr. N— and Mr. Steele, who lodged in the same house, although of very different characters. The honorable Mr. N— had already made the tour of Europe, and returned to his native country more free from narrow prejudices, less infected with foreign fopperies, and more improved both in knowledge and in manner, than the generality of his countrymen who have made the same tour. After remaining a few years at home, he was seized with a complaint in his breast threatening a consumption, for which he was advised to return to Italy, and resided for the most part at Naples, where he intended to remain a year longer, although at this time he seemed to have in a great measure regained his health.

Mr. N— had been well acquainted with Signora Sporza during his first residence at Naples, and was now on the most friendly footing with that lady. Besides his companion Mr. Steele, he had introduced to her acquaintance another countryman of his own—Mr. Squander. This gentleman was distinguished by spending more money with less enjoyment than any English traveller in Italy. Without any knowledge of horses, or any love for the animal, he kept a stable of English horses at Naples. His incitement to this was, his having heard a certain peer who had a violent passion for the turf mentioned with admiration for having established a horserace in the English style. Mr. Squander matched one of his horses with one of his lordship's, and had the renown of losing a greater sum than ever was lost at a horse-race at Naples:—what rendered this the more memorable though the less surprising was, that he rode himself. He gave frequent entertainments, to which he invited his own countrymen only, they generally ended in drunkenness, noise, and riot. He bought pictures, statues, and seals, because they were highly praised by the vendors; and afterwards gave them away in presents, because they were despised by the rest of the world. Without any inclination for gaming, this young man was ready on the slightest invitation to join any party at deep play, and had sometimes been drawn into that above mentioned at Signora Sporza's. As he was the only one of this party devoid of skill, and who played without attention, he generally lost the most, and sometimes was the only person who lost at all.

How Mr. Steele came to be connected with Mr. N—

will appear hereafter; but as he and Squander had been presented by him to Signora Sporza, she was particularly uneasy to see them throw away their money. She was uncommonly attentive to strangers, and rather partial to the English;—by her frank and engaging manners, she gradually overcame their natural reserve, and dissipated their timidity; and some of that nation, who from the time of their crossing the channel had never dined but with a club of their own countrymen, and had never gone twice to any other assembly at Naples, were insensibly prevailed upon to attend those of Signora Sporza; and at length they went with pleasure instead of reluctance.

At her assembly one evening, Signora Sporza perceived the same party forming with which Mr. Squander had lost so much money. Why do you not advise your countryman, said she in a whisper to Mr. N—, to avoid these people? they will pillage him of all his money.

Because, replied Mr. N—, my countryman hates advice more than he loves money.

You Englishmen, resumed she, perhaps consider advice as an encroachment on that liberty you are so fond of.

Certainly, said Mr. N—, smiling, the Cherokees, and other refined nations in America, think in the same manner.

Will you not try then to keep him out of those people's hands? said she.

I should try in vain, said Mr. N—; but if you please to draw him off to a safer party, whatever he may wish, he is too awkward, and will be too much embarrassed, when a lady speaks to him, to be able to excuse himself.

Basta! cried she; and immediately accosting Squander, we have need of you here, signor, said she; and so she engaged him for the evening with a party who played at a very small stake.

Signora Sporza thus using all her address to prevent deep play at her assemblies, and to save the unwary from being preyed upon, the gamblers gradually paid her less attention, and at last entirely forsook her house, for that of another lady with whom Signora Sporza was on ill terms, and who, out of mere spite, established an assembly at her own house on the evenings which Signora Sporza had fixed upon.

Zeluco, although he now possessed far more wealth than he could enjoy, required the agitation of gaming to ward off the intolerable languor which is apt to invade unoccupied minds, and also to preclude reflection or retrospect on past conduct, which in him was always attended with self-condemnation. He therefore became a constant attendant at the rival assembly, and a considerable time had passed since he had waited on Signora Sporza, when he observed her one evening at the opera, accompanied by two ladies, neither of whom he had ever before seen: the elder a genteel-looking woman, between forty and fifty years of age;—the other about twenty. He gazed on the latter, and thought her by far the most beautiful woman he had ever beheld; the longer he looked, he was the more confirmed in that opinion: he now regretted the coldness subsisting between him and Signora Sporza, and resolved to use all means for removing it, as the most easy way of being introduced to the lady whom he so much admired. Impatient as he was to address Signora Sporza, he hesitated about doing it that night, lest she should impute it to the real cause. A glance from the young lady brought him at once to decision; he could no longer command his impatience; but leaving Signora Sporza to put what construction she pleased on his behavior, he suddenly darted from his own box, and entered that in which she and the two strangers were. With eagerness, and in the most obsequious language, he apologized to the former for not having paid his duty to her of late, imputed it to indispensable business, and begged to be permitted that honor the next morning, alleging he had something of importance to acquaint her with. Having finished his apology, he bowed very respectfully to the strangers, and then looked with significance at Signora Sporza, who heard him with the reserve of offended pride, taking no notice of his significant look; but, after a grave bend of her head to him, resumed her conversation with the strangers as if no other person had been in the box. In spite of this very cool reception, Zeluco kept his place in the box, and his eyes almost constantly riveted on the young lady, till the opera was finished, and then attended them to their carriage; after which he went home and ruminated all the rest of the night on the charms of the fair stranger.

He waited next morning on Signora Sporza, who had not been an inattentive spectator of the impression which her young friend's beauty had made on Zeluco; she allowed him with the most cruel tranquillity to go through the ceremony of explaining his pretended affair of importance, without interrupting him, or assisting him in his way to the real business which she well knew was the object of his visit.

She heard him without seeming to take any interest in what he said;—the important affair did not draw from her a single observation: he was so much disconcerted by the coldness of her behavior, that he was unable to introduce any discourse regarding the strangers. He wished to do this in an indirect manner, as a thing in which he took little concern, and waited for a favorable opportunity.

Do you know, said Signora Sporza, interrupting the silence, how many birds his majesty killed yesterday? I heard he went early a-shooting.

A-propos, replied Zeluco; Pray, Signora, who is that lady I had the honor of seeing with you yesterday at the opera?

Very a-propos, indeed, said she; May I ask which lady you mean? there were two in the box with me last night.

Two! cried Zeluco: O yes; I now recollect there were two;—but I mean—I mean the elder.

She is a very near relation of mine, replied she, suppressing a smile; and then turned the conversation to a different subject, which, with the awkward manner in which he had introduced his favorite topic, increased his embarrassment.

Yet before he took his leave, he recovered his presence of mind so far as to let a china snuff-box he had taken off the table fall on the hearth, where it instantly shivered in pieces. After making becoming apologies, he took his leave, and the same day sent a gold snuff-box, enriched with diamonds, with a letter to Signora Sporza, entreating her to accept of the one as an atonement for having destroyed the other.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Digna misera misero, non meliore viro." Orid.

SOME few days after this, Zeluco again waited on Signora Sporza. She received him with more frankness than at his last visit; he imputed this to the benign influence of the snuff-box: as soon as he was seated, she whispered her maid, who instantly withdrew.

They talked for a while on the common incidents of the place; of a new singer that was expected; of a violent explosion which had happened the preceding night from mount Vesuvius; of the queen's having seemed out of humor at the last gala; of a man who had stabbed his rival in the street at mid-day, and then had taken refuge in a church; of a religious procession that was to take place next morning, and of a ball in the evening.

Zeluco endeavored to turn the conversation from those topics, so as that it might seem to fall undesignedly on that which was the object of his visit. Signora Sporza observing this, said, I will give you the history of the ladies by and by, signor; but I expect two people immediately, to whom you have rendered a most essential service; and you must permit them to thank you in the first place.

He could not possibly comprehend her meaning; but soon after the maid introduced a very handsome young woman, plainly dressed, with a child in her arms, followed by a genteel-looking man, who seemed to be a tradesman, and a few years older than the woman.

Zeluco was greatly surprised at their appearance.

This is your benefactor, Camillo, said Signora Sporza, addressing herself to the man; the generous person who enabled me to free you from prison.

I am greatly indebted to you, signor, said the man in a most respectful yet manly manner; and although I do not absolutely despair of being one day enabled to repay what you have so humanely advanced to liberate me, yet I shall never be free from the strong sense of obligation I feel towards you.

Ah, signor! cried the woman, unable to contain herself, you do not know what a worthy and noble-hearted man you have relieved; you do not know the extent of the blessed deed you have done; you have preserved my sweet infants from death; you have ransomed my beloved husband from prison, and you have saved my poor brain from madness. O signor! had you but seen— Here the tears obscured her sight; the recollection of her husband's condition when in prison, with the keen sensations of gratitude, suppressed her voice;—she was ready to faint;—her husband snatched the child from her arms, and the poor woman sunk down on a chair which Signora Sporza suddenly placed to receive her.

Camillo, with his child in one arm, supported his wife with the other; while Signora Sporza chafed her temples with aromatic spirits. Margherita will be well immediately, Camillo, said Signora Sporza; see, she recovers already.—Thank heaven, cried Camillo with fervor; then begged leave to conduct his wife home. Signora Sporza attended her with Camillo and the child into another room, ordered them some refreshment, and desired they might not leave the house till she came back.

All this was as great a mystery to Zeluco as it is to the reader.—If I had suspected, said Signora Sporza to him, as she returned to the room in which he had remained, that this poor woman would have been so much affected, I should have spared you the scene, which I will now endeavor to explain:—I have known this young woman from her childhood; she was always the most cheerful sweet-tempered creature I ever knew. By my recommendation, on the death of her mother, she was taken into the service of the Marchesa de B—; and in a short time she became her favorite maid. The marchesa is liberal, and the girl was as happy as a maid could be whose mistress has the misfortune of being put out of humor every day as soon as she rises: the cause of her ill-humor was without remedy, and grew daily more inveterate; it proceeded from her observing more gray hairs on her head, and more wrinkles in her face, every morning, than she had seen the day before: but although her peevishness was diurnal, it did not last long at a time, for Margherita powdered her hair with wonderful expedition; and as soon as her face was varnished, and her toilet finished, she contemplated herself in the mirror with complacency, recovered her cheerfulness, and Margherita was happy for the rest of the day. Meanwhile, the man who has just left us fell in love with her, and she fell in love with him; and from that moment the girl's mind was more occupied with her lover than her mistress; whose head, after this incident, was neither so expeditiously nor so neatly dressed as formerly. When the marchesa found out the cause of this alteration, she was very much out of humor indeed, and told Margherita, that she must either give up all communication with the lover or with her:—So you will consider the difference between me and him, continued she, and then decide. Margherita accordingly did consider the difference; and decided in favor of the man. After leaving the marchesa, she passed more of her time than ever with her lover; and their mutual love increased to a very alarming height. Neither of them, however, ever thought of any other remedy than marriage; and notwithstanding the numbers who have found it a radical cure for love, to this couple it has hitherto proved ineffectual; in the opinion of the poor people themselves, the disease re-

ther gains ground, although they have now been married two complete years, and have two children.

The husband, who was at first employed in the coarse preparatory work for sculptors, has himself become a tolerable artist; he redoubled his industry as his family increased, and saved a little money. Margherita on her part cheered him under his labor, by the most active attention to family economy, by everlasting good-humor, and undiminished affection. The bloom and growing vigor of their children was a source of joyful forboding to both. It was delightful to contemplate the happiness of this little family. I often called on Margherita, purely to enjoy that happiness; health, content, and mutual love resided under their humble roof: obtaining with difficulty the superfluities, or even necessities of life, they tasted pleasure with a relish unknown to those who have the overflowing cup of enjoyment constantly pressed to their lips. The gloom of their poverty was cheered by some of the brightest stars of pleasure, and by the hope of permanent sunshine. But all this fair and serene prospect was suddenly obscured by a terrible storm. The imprudent husband, impatient to become rapidly rich, was persuaded to collect all the little money which he had saved, to accept of a larger sum on credit, and to risk the whole in a commercial adventure:—the whole was lost;—and the obdurate creditor immediately seized on all the furniture and effects of this little family, and threw Camillo into jail. Margherita, half-distracted, came and told me her story. It happened by a superabundance of ill-luck that I was very low in cash myself, and had overdrawn my credit with my banker; I gave her what I had, but it was not sufficient to procure her husband's liberty, which happened to be what poor Margherita was most solicitous about. I begged of her to call on me the following morning, determining then to go in search of the necessary sum; but before I set out, the snuff-box, of which you desired my acceptance, arrived: instead of going to borrow money, signor, which, if you ever had the experience of it, you must know to be the most disagreeable thing on earth, I went and sold the snuff-box, and in my opinion to very great advantage; for the sum I received has not only freed the poor fellow from prison and redeemed his effects, but also makes him a little richer than he was before his unfortunate attempt in commerce. I informed the joyful couple that I had received the money from you, which in effect I did; they knew no more of the matter; and now that you have heard the whole, and have seen the family whom your bounty has saved, I am convinced you will approve of what has been done.

Zelucio expressed great admiration of the benevolence of Signora Sporza, but insisted on redeeming the snuff-box, and restoring it to her. This she absolutely refused, saying, that the circumstances which she had related formed the only consideration which could have prevailed on her to accept of a present of that value; but she was willing to receive from him a snuff-box of the same kind with that he had so fortunately broken, which she would wear as a memorial of that happy event. Zelucio, finding her obstinate, was obliged to agree to this compromise of the matter.

It was already observed, that Zelucio was greatly surprised when Margherita was presented to him: he had, however, frequently seen her before; and this was one reason of his being a little confounded at her appearance at Signora Sporza's; but on recollecting, that although he knew her, yet she did not know him, he resumed his composure.

In going to church, Margherita usually had passed the windows of Zelucio's apartment, and he had often remarked her as she went and returned to and from mass.

Being somewhat captivated by her face and person, he employed an agent to find out where she lived and what she was; and afterwards commissioned the same person to engage her to meet a very honorable gentleman, who was greatly captivated with her beauty, at a house appropriated for a rendezvous of this nature. Margherita rejected the offers of the agent, baffled the arts employed to seduce her, and would have nothing to do with the very honorable gentleman.

This unexpected resistance increased Zelucio's ardor. His valet was acquainted with the man who had lent Camillo the money which the imprudent fellow had sunk in the ill-judged commercial adventure. This man, who thought his money in little or no danger when he first advanced it, was now exceedingly uneasy, and had already begun to press Camillo for payment. The valet acquainted Zelucio with those circumstances, who instructed the valet to persuade the creditor, that it was vain for him to expect that ever Camillo could pay the money; and that as long as he was left at large, none of his friends would think of advancing it for him; but that, if he were thrown into prison for the debt, some of his or his wife's friends would then certainly step forth for his relief.

The man scrupled to use so violent an expedient; but having mentioned it to his wife, by whom Margherita was envied on account of her superior beauty, and hated on account of her unblemished character, she pressed her husband to adopt this harsh expedient, as the only means of recovering his money. The creditor, however, still hesitated, till the valet assured him, under the obligation of an oath of secrecy, that he knew a person who would advance a sum sufficient to pay all Camillo's debts, rather than allow him to remain long in prison; and he became bound himself to do this if Camillo was not released by the other within a month.

Zelucio, who took care not to appear in all this infamous transaction, imagined, that when Margherita was once separated from her husband and humbled by distress, she would then listen to the secret proposals he intended to renew through his former agent.

The creditor having given orders to his attorney to proceed to extremities against Camillo, went himself into the country, that he might avoid a scene which his heart was not hard

enough to support. But his orders were executed very punctually on the very day in which Zelucio was so much struck with the beauty of the young lady at the opera. She had engrossed his mind so entirely, that from that moment he never once thought of Margherita, till he saw her introduced with her husband at Signora Sporza's, and found that the present he had sent to that lady with a very different view, had been the means of relieving a family brought to the brink of ruin by his insidious arts.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"On aime à deviner les autres, mais on n'aime pas à être deviné."

Rochefoucault.

WHATEVER shame or compunction Zelucio felt on receiving praises he so little deserved, for conferring benefits which he never intended, he certainly supported the character he had to act with great assurance.

After the compromise already mentioned, Signora Sporza gave him the following account of the ladies whose history he was so impatient to know. The elder, she said, was her cousin-german, and widow of Colonel Seidlitz, an officer lately deceased, in the king of Prussia's service. She was a Neapolitan by birth, who finding it disagreeable after her husband's death to remain at Berlin, where she could not afford to live in the same style she had formerly done, had lately returned to her native country, with her daughter Laura; that she inherited from her father a small estate in the Campagna Felice, and her inclination for removing from Berlin to Naples had been strengthened by the hope of making good a claim she had in right of an uncle, which, although of no great value in itself, was of great importance to her in her very circumscribed circumstances; and which, however just, did not the less depend on the favor of the minister.

Zelucio expressed much concern that two ladies of their merit should labor under difficulties; adding, that on account of their connexion with her, he should think himself very happy in having it in his power to be of service to them.

Signora Sporza penetrated into the motive of Zelucio's proffered services; but she also knew that he was on an intimate footing with the minister, and might be of essential service to her cousin in the affair of her claim, the decision of which had been hitherto protracted on the most frivolous pretexts in the most litigious manner. It must be confessed, that, in the warmth of Signora Sporza's zeal to serve her friends, she was often regardless of the motive from which those who served them acted: could she have induced Zelucio to serve Madame de Seidlitz from pure and honorable motive, no doubt she would have preferred it; but that not being in his power, she thought the next best was to secure the same effect whatever produced it. After thanking Zelucio therefore for his obliging offer, she added, that if he would do her the pleasure of calling in the evening, she would present him to her two relations; and that Madame de Seidlitz would herself explain to him the grounds of her claim.

Being introduced accordingly to the two ladies as a friend of Signora Sporza, he became intoxicated with the elegant sweetness of Laura's manner, which he found equal to her beauty, and listened with much seeming attention and apparent solicitude to the history of her mother's suit, expressing great zeal to serve her on that or any other occasion.

The nobleman with whom Zelucio came to Naples, had considerable influence with the minister: Zelucio himself had more; both were employed in giving him a favorable idea of Madame de Seidlitz's case, or rather in inspiring him with a desire of promoting it, independent of the right on which it was founded. It is probable that Zelucio was thinking on something else during that part of Madame de Seidlitz's narrative; for the foundation of her claim was what he was unable to explain, but it was also what the minister showed no anxiety to understand. Soon after, however, he publicly hinted, that having taken much pains to get a clear idea of Madame de Seidlitz's claim, he was led to believe that the judges would decide in her favor. As the minister's prophecies of this kind were generally accomplished, Madame de Seidlitz was congratulated on this happy omen, as if she had already gained her cause; and she imputed this fair prospect to the interposition of Zelucio.

From this time he had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with Laura, and he exhausted all his power of insinuation to ingratiate himself into her good opinion, but without success. This young lady had more penetration into character, and a far juster way of thinking, than any of her sex with whom he had hitherto been acquainted; the same arts which had rendered him agreeable to many of them, had a contrary effect on her: she was not pleased when she observed, that, as often as he found her alone, his conversation was much interspersed with compliments on her beauty. She had been sufficiently accustomed to sweeteners of this kind, not to value them above their worth; and she had remarked, that they proceeded as often from a contempt of the understanding, as from an admiration of the beauty of the person to whom they were addressed. But whatever doubts Laura might have of Zelucio's sincerity, when he expressed a high opinion of her merit, there was something in his air and manner which convinced her he had a very high opinion of his own. In this, however, Laura was in some degree mistaken; for, notwithstanding the loftiness of his manner, Zelucio's self-conceit was confined to his external figure, to his address, and his natural talents; he was conscious of having neglected the opportunities of improvement, and lamented the want of certain accomplishments which he with envy saw others possess; for, with whatever plausible varnish he concealed his foibles or vices from the sight of others, he found it impossible to hide them from his own; so that, when flattery poured the honey of

adulation into his cup, the unconquerable power of conscience often turned it into gall, and rendered him unable to swallow the nauseous draught: yet by a singular effect of selfish caprice, though sensible of his own failings and vices, he detested all whom he suspected of having sufficient penetration to see into his real character, and of harboring the same sentiments with himself. He could support the company of those only upon whose understandings he imagined he imposed, by giving them a much better idea of his character than it deserved. This accounts for his constant preference of ignorant society, and for the gloom and dissatisfaction which attended him as often as he was not engaged in such pursuits as kill thought and reflection. Yet this dissatisfied miserable man, on whose mind repentance and remorse were often obtruding themselves, was, on account of his wealth, and the splendid style in which he lived, considered by many as remarkably fortunate and happy.

We are never more apt to be mistaken than in our estimate of the happiness of grandeur. The grove overlooking the precipice has a fine effect at a distance: we admire the sublimity of its situation, and the brightness of its verdure when gilded by the rays of the sun; we grudge no labor in scrambling up to this seat of pleasure, which, when attained, we often find cold and comfortable, overgrown with moss, pierced by the winds of every quarter, and far less genial than the sheltered bank from whence we set out. In like manner many men, who are viewed with admiration and envy at a distance, become the object of pity or contempt when nearly approached. Of this we may be most assured, that all the decorations of rank and the smiles of fortune cannot prevent the intrusions of remorse and self-condemnation upon a mind sensible of having abused talents, and neglected through life the opportunities of improvement; far less can they convey happiness, or even tranquility, to one conscious of perfidy, cruelty, and ingratitude. But Laura did not at this time know that the peace of Zelucio's mind was disturbed by intruders of this nature; and the vain satisfaction which he frequently enjoyed from the contemplation of his face and figure, she imagined extended to his whole character, and rendered him, in her opinion, by much too well satisfied with himself.

However profuse of panegyric Zelucio was, as often as he happened to find Laura by herself, yet he always stopped short, and abruptly changed the tenor of his discourse when her mother joined them.

This did not escape the observation of Laura; and one day, on his making this sudden transition as Madame de Seidlitz entered the room, Laura said to him gravely, There is no need, signor, for you to fly from the subject on which you have dwelt so long! I do assure you, the praises of my beauty are to the full as agreeable to my mother as they are to myself.

At this unexpected remark, Zelucio's countenance suddenly displayed strong marks of displeasure, and even rage; but recollecting himself, he instantly smoothed it over with the smile of good-humor; and having bowed, and inquired after the health of Madame de Seidlitz, he turned to Laura, saying, I fly not from the subject, madam; the praise of your good qualities is the most delightful of all subjects to me; but a sudden thought struck me immediately before your mother entered the room.

A sudden thought seemed to strike you also after she entered, said Laura, if one may judge from the alterations in your countenance.

I know nothing of my countenance, said Zelucio with a careless air; but I have great satisfaction at my heart in informing you, madam, continued he, and turning to Madame de Seidlitz, that your claim is admitted to its fullest extent, of which you will have more formal notice this very day from the court.

Madame de Seidlitz expressed a strong sense of obligation to Zelucio, imputing her success to his influence and exertions; he on his part affected to place it wholly to the justice of her cause; expressing astonishment, however, at its having been delayed so very long, and with an ostentatious air of modesty disclaiming any kind of merit from his poor feeble efforts.

When Zelucio withdrew, Madame de Seidlitz spoke of him with all the partiality of gratitude. Laura assented with coolness and moderation; she had observed something in his looks and conduct which displeased her, and conveyed some faint suspicion of his motives. Madame de Seidlitz did not refuse on looks or language; she founded her idea of Zelucio's general character on the personal obligations she lay under to him. On occasions of this nature, the mother is generally more prone to be suspicious than the daughter; in this particular instance it was otherwise: Laura had as much sensibility to the impressions of gratitude as her mother; but having doubts respecting Zelucio's disposition and motives, she would have been more pleased if the favor had come from another hand.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"La physionomie n'est pas une règle qui nous soit donnée pour juger des hommes; elle nous peut servir de conjecture."

La Bruyère.

MADAME de Seidlitz felt great satisfaction in the thoughts of her having at length obtained justice; and the good and friendly character of Zelucio was the frequent theme of her panegyric. When she was dwelling one day on this favorite topic, it is unfortunate, said Laura, that the expression of his countenance corresponds so ill with the qualities of his heart.

I do not know what you mean, my dear, said the mother; few men are so handsome as Signor Zelucio.

It is, I believe, generally thought so, said Laura; but I confess I am not of the general opinion.

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No! that a little surprises me.

When I speak of the expression of the countenance, resumed Laura, I mean something different from beauty or ugliness: there are many men whom I think plainer than Signor Zeluco, whose countenance has nothing of that expression, which I think rather disagreeable in his.

Am I to understand, child, said Madame de Seidlitz, smiling, that a man may be too handsome to be agreeable to you? You would laugh at me if I said so, replied Laura; yet if a man seems too sensible of his being handsome, you must admit that he is the less agreeable on that account.

When a man happens to be handsome, replied Madame de Seidlitz, people are apt to conclude, without any other reason, that he is vain of his looks.

I am not, however, so unjust, said Laura: for example, I agree with the general opinion in thinking Mr. N—, the Englishman who is so often at our cousin's, very handsome; yet he is so free from airs and all appearance of conceit, that it is impossible to think him vain. His features express goodness of heart; but I have seen features which, considered separately, seem as good, and yet the countenance on the whole to which they belong, conveys the idea of the reverse.

I do not admit, replied Madame de Seidlitz, that this is the case with Signor Zeluco's.

Perhaps I am whimsical in this point, said Laura; but I am convinced a man may be hard-favored, and yet give no idea of his being a bad man. And with respect to Signor Zeluco, I do think that those who do not know from experience that he is of a good character, might be apt to suspect him of a bad.

Nothing depends more on whim, or is more uncertain, than the pretended art of physiognomy, said Madame de Seidlitz. Yet it never fails to have some influence on our opinion, cried Laura.

It ought not, replied Madame de Seidlitz; it may mislead us greatly: did you ever, for example, behold a more lovely face than that of the wretched woman we saw the other night at the opera? yet her profligate life is well known. You may recollect also, how very hard and unpleasant the countenance of your father's friend, Colonel Sleiffen, was; yet there never existed a worthier man. You ought therefore, my dear Laura, to beware of imagining that vice is connected with deformity, or virtue with external beauty.

I beg pardon, my dear madam, replied Laura, but I might use the two instances you have given in support of my argument; for the opera woman you mention, in spite of her beauty, I should never have thought a person of a virtuous disposition; and I always imagined I saw benevolence shining through the harsh features of Colonel Sleiffen.

I suspect, replied Madame de Seidlitz, that a previous knowledge of their character led your opinion in both cases; and I am sure that candor and charity ought to prevent our suspecting any person of being bad, till we have reason to believe so from their conduct.

I do assure you, my dear mother, said Laura, that it always gives me pain to think ill of any body, and it affords me sincere pleasure to find them better than I expected.

Have you any reason to think ill of Signor Zeluco? said Madame de Seidlitz with some emotion; I remember you said something that seemed unpleasant to him as I entered.

Why, no,—no, replied Laura, with a little hesitation; he was paying me a few compliments, and stopped short as you entered. I only hinted to him that I liked no conversation when you were not present, that he judged improper when you were. But as to thinking ill of him,—I have—I have no reason; we were talking of his looks.

They afford no reason indeed, said Madame de Seidlitz; I hope experience, my dear, will teach you to judge of worth by some more certain criterion than the features of the face.

I hope it will, my dearest madam, replied Laura, taking her mother's hand affectionately in both hers, and, till then, my opinions shall be directed by your judgment; of this you may rest assured, that nothing can ever influence me to think ill of those whom you continue to think well of.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Illa quidem primò nullo intellegit ignes."

Ovid. Metamorph. lib. ix.

ZELUCO had been disconcerted, as has been mentioned, and was a little piqued at the manner in which Laura received the compliments that he paid her, and what she said in his hearing to her mother; but he was still more mortified to perceive the indifference which she displayed towards him on all occasions, notwithstanding his peculiar attention to her, and the pains he took to gain her regard. Had Laura been thoroughly acquainted with Zeluco's character, the distaste she had to him would not have been surprising, but she had not had sufficient opportunity of knowing him; she saw something in his manner indeed, and in the expression of his countenance, which she did not like; yet it might have been expected that the elegance of his person, and the splendor of his wealth, would have inclined her to get the better of this prejudice, as perhaps they would, had not her imagination been prepossessed in a manner which will appear singular.

Laura's father had a son by a former marriage, who was now a captain of dragoons in the Prussian service. This gentleman's most intimate friend was the Baron Carlostein, a man of family and very considerable fortune. They served together under the great Frederic, in the short war concerning the Bavarian succession.

After one unfortunate skirmish, a small detachment which Carlostein commanded formed the rear of the retreating party, and defended a particular post with great obstinacy, that the main body might have time to make good their retreat: as he was falling back at last, his detachment was surrounded by a numerous party of Austrian hussars, and, notwith-

standing a very steady resistance, would have been cut to pieces, or made prisoners, had not Captain Seidlitz, at the head of a few dragoons, made a desperate charge, by which the hussars were dispersed, and Carlostein, with the survivors of his detachment, brought off.

This was the commencement of a very intimate friendship between these two officers. At the termination of the war, Captain Seidlitz prevailed on his friend to pass a few days at a little villa belonging to his father in the neighborhood of Berlin; Laura was then a child between ten and eleven years of age. She had often heard her father, and other officers, mention Carlostein as a young man of the greatest hopes; she had heard many ladies talk of him as remarkably genteel and amiable. Her brother had written in terms of high admiration of Carlostein's conduct in the action above mentioned, and she had heard his letters read to the company at her father's table. When Laura understood, therefore, that the person whom she had heard so much applauded was coming to her father's house, she expected to see a hero. The appearance and manners of Carlostein did not belie her expectation: during the short stay which he made at the villa, he was treated by Colonel Seidlitz and his lady with that distinguished hospitality which it was natural they should pay to a man of his character and rank, the intimate friend of their son. What Laura had heard of this young officer, the respect paid him by her parents, the affectionate attachment of her brother, his own figure and elegant manners, tended to fire her fancy, and render him, in her mind, the first of human beings. He had received a wound with a sabre on one side of his brow, which reached beneath his temple: the scar was covered with a slip of black plaster, appearing peculiarly graceful in the child's eyes, and a confirmation of the heroic character of Carlostein. Colonel Seidlitz and his lady perceived Laura's admiration of their guest, and were amused with the earnest manner in which she sometimes looked at him, and the pleased attention with which she listened when he spoke.

The colonel one day observed her examining a print of Le Brun's picture of the family of Darius.—What has caught your fancy here? said he, coming behind, and tapping her on the shoulder. The child imagined that she saw a likeness to Carlostein in the countenance which Le Brun gives to Alexander.—Do you not think, replied she, that this face, pointing to Hephestion, has a resemblance of my brother?

The colonel having looked attentively at the print, and observing the resemblance which really had attracted Laura's attention, fell a-laughing, and replied, No, my dear, I cannot say I do,—but I own I am somewhat surprised that the resemblance between this face, pointing to Alexander, and your friend Baron Carlostein, seems entirely to have escaped so accurate an observer as you are.

The child seemed a little out of countenance; and when Colonel Seidlitz recounted the circumstance to his lady, he added, I should be glad to know at what age a young lady begins to disguise her sentiments? At the same age that young gentlemen begin to disguise theirs, replied Madame de Seidlitz; when they suspect, from the behavior of those around, that there is something wrong or ridiculous in their sentiments. We first taught Laura, continued she, to admire the baron; and afterwards, by laughing at the child for the marks of admiration which she shows, we give her a notion that there is something ridiculous in it: of course she wishes to conceal what exposes her to raillery. A boy would have done the same.

I imagine, not exactly in the same way, replied the colonel. Carlostein went soon after to his estate in a distant part of the Prussian dominions; he afterwards passed some time in France; on his return to his own country, his duty as a soldier kept him with his regiment, and he had never after seen Laura, or thought of her more than as an agreeable child, the sister of his friend.

The impression which he made on her imagination was certainly stronger, and more permanent; although her parents considered this partiality of Laura's to Carlostein as

"A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent; sweet, but not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute."

Laura herself endeavored to conceal it, to prevent the raillery to which it exposed her; yet it had some influence in making her reject the addresses of more than one lover before she left Germany; all of whom were thought advantageous matches, considering the smallness of her fortune. She found them to fall so far beneath the accomplished Carlostein, that she did not hesitate a moment. The same impression, though now considerably weakened by time, tended to make her view Zeluco with indifference, and often with dislike: so much did he fall below that model of which she still carried the traces in her memory. In this preference, Laura proved that her judgment was not directed by external appearance; for, in the general opinion, Zeluco would have passed for a handsomer man than Carlostein.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Non te Penelope dilectum proci
Tyrrhenus genuit patris."

Horat.

HOWEVER much Zeluco was mortified and piqued at the indifference of Laura, his passion for her rather seemed to augment than to cool. As the house where he had the most convenient opportunities of meeting with her was that of Signora Sporza, he thought it indispensably necessary to keep that lady in constant good-humor with him: with this view he cultivated her favor with the most respectful assiduity. He attempted in vain, however, to prevail on her to accept of any present of value: she always declined his offers

* Shakespeare.

with good-humor and gaiety, saying, Nobody in whom she was particularly interested was at that time in prison for debt; but when any such case occurred, she would apply to him for a ring or snuff-box proper for their relief. Zeluco considered all this as mere affectation and grimace, and was convinced that she would, in due time, unfold the particular mode in which she wished to be indemnified; for he took it for granted, that indemnified in one shape or other she intended to be, for whatever civility she showed, or whatever trouble she took on his account. In the meantime, he plainly perceived that she would not stoop to be directly assisting to his views on Laura. He imagined she had come to a resolution to observe a neutrality, till such time at least as she could exact a very large subsidy for acting as an auxiliary. But in these conjectures he had entirely mistaken the character of the lady.

Bred in a country where a very free system of gallantry prevails, Signora Sporza certainly did not view it in that light that a virtuous woman ought. In her youth, she had been a coquette, and she retained something of that appearance at an age when coquetry is less tolerable; which gave a handle to her enemies to maintain that she had carried matters beyond the point at which simple coquetry is supposed to stop: this, however, they were never able to ascertain—and as those who were most industrious to spread the insinuation, were, with better grounds, thought to be in that predicament themselves, their malice had the less effect. Her constant good-humor, humane disposition, and easy manners, rendered her highly agreeable to society in general; and she had lived on the best terms with her husband, undisturbed by jealousy, notwithstanding his being an Italian.

Her talent for raillery she managed with such address, as to render it entertaining in general, without being offensive in particular. More dull downright scandal, which had no object but the gratification of malice, she detested, and considered the circulation of every story to the disadvantage of others, as inexcusable, even although founded in truth. When a connexion of a particular kind subsisted between two people of different sexes, nobody was more quick than Signora Sporza in perceiving it; yet she was never heard to give the least hint of her knowledge or suspicion of such an intrigue. If the parties met openly at her assemblies, she received them with her usual politeness; if either of them made her acquainted with their intimacy, she would not suffer them to visit her afterwards. She never would be the confidante of a love intrigue; because accessaries, she said, were as guilty as the principals, with far less temptation: besides, she added, as the loving couple generally quarrel afterwards, and sometimes go the length of hating each other, part of this hatred may extend to those who encouraged their connexion.

Another of this lady's maxims was, that nothing should ever be told concerning one friend or another, particularly to a husband of his wife, or to a wife of her husband, which would give them pain to know. If what is told is false, all the world agrees, that the tale-bearer has done a very ill thing; and if it happens to be true, in Signora Sporza's opinion, a much worse; for a malicious falsehood, said she, ceases to do harm, when the truth comes to be known, but the mischief attending a malicious truth is more durable. Jealousy, whether well or ill founded, she considered as the greatest plague of society; a jealous husband or wife she thought the most odious of all odious animals, and as carefully to be excluded from good company as mad people or cut-throats. She had no scruple in declaring that, in her opinion, the man was devoid of principle who intrigued with any gentlewoman, however willing she might be, before such gentlewoman was provided with a husband, or at least within a very short time of being so: and she thought that man was very little better, who did not take due precautions to prevent his intercourse with a woman of reputation from becoming public, even although the lady was married.

As Signora Sporza had no favorable opinion of Zeluco from her first acquaintance with him, and even strongly suspected the nature of his views on Laura; it will seem extraordinary that she did not communicate these suspicions to Laura, or to Madame de Seidlitz, for both of whom her esteem and affection hourly increased.—The truth is, it was this very affection that prevented her. She expected to make Zeluco's attachment to Laura, and his influence with the minister, of service to her friends in other schemes which she meditated for their benefit; but she saw plainly, from the avowed principles and undeviating conduct of both mother and daughter, that on the slightest idea of his views on Laura they would renounce all connexion with Zeluco, and spurn at every advantage that could attend it. Having a very high opinion, therefore, of Laura's prudence, on which she relied much, and believing in her aversion to the man, on which she relied more, she permitted him quietly to proceed in his scheme, convinced however that he would be successful only in promoting hers.

There certainly was little delicacy in Signora Sporza's way of thinking on this and some other subjects; and as she was of a friendly benevolent disposition, and possessed some excellent qualities, it is to be regretted that they were intermingled with any of baser alloy.

Our only reason for describing men and women as animals of heterogeneous composition, made up of bad as well as good materials, is, that we have hitherto always found them so; but we shall be happy to delineate uniform and perfect characters as soon as we have the good fortune to meet their prototypes in nature. There is room to fear, however, that they are as difficult to find as they would be agreeable and easy to describe; and that the race of those perfect beings, incapable of weakness and invulnerable to vice, who are ever armed at all points, and cased in virtues as the knights of chivalry were in mail, has entirely failed, as well as that of those tremendous giants, void of every virtue and replete with every vice, who lived in the same ages:—till these opposit-

extremes, men entirely good or completely wicked, appear again, we must be contented with that mediocrity of character which prevails, and draw mankind as we find them, the best subject to weaknesses, the worst imbued with some good quality.

In a character, such as that of the person whose story we have the unpleasant task of recording, there are, perhaps, fewer good qualities than in any other, because cruelty was become the basis of Zeluco's character, at least a total disregard to the feelings of his fellow-creatures, when any interest or gratification of his own was in question.

This disposition of the mind, we conceive, admits of fewer good qualities, and is connected with a greater number of bad, than any other of which human nature is susceptible.—Montaigne, indeed, has said, *Nature a (ce crains-je), elle-même attaché à l'homme quelque instinct à l'humanité*. But it is to be hoped, that the instinct he mentions belongs only to devils, and that a disinterested pleasure in the sufferings of others exists not even in the most wicked of human breasts. It is sufficiently deplorable that any of mankind are capable of pursuing what they consider as their own interest, and sometimes interest of a very frivolous nature, at the expense of extreme misery to their fellow-creatures. The proofs, however, of this degree of cruelty need not be drawn from the stories of giants and records of chivalry; they are frequently found in more authentic history, and may be adduced from the conduct of too many of the heroes and great men of antiquity; not to mention the great men of our own days, whose sentiments and conduct, however different from those of the former in every other respect, have a wonderful resemblance to their predecessors, in this article of insensibility and disregard of the misery of others.

CHAPTER XXX.

A perfidious attempt.

As Zeluco now found more frequent opportunities than ever of being in company with Laura, he continued his assiduities with increased zeal, and strove by every means of insinuation with which he was acquainted to gain her good opinion: but with all the pains he took and the art he used, her behavior to him never exceeded the bounds of common politeness, and sometimes a kind of politeness which savored a little of dislike.

Although few men had less tenderness than Zeluco for the self-love of others, none could feel more exquisitely when their own was wounded: he perceived Laura's indifference with indignation, and would have endured it with still more impatience, had he not found a balsam to alleviate the smart in the very root from whence it sprang. His vanity, while it made him feel the indifference of Laura, persuaded him that she was deficient in penetration, and did not relish the graces with which he thought himself adorned, as women of taste usually do. *L'ombrage propre*, as Rochefoucault finely observes, *empêche bien que celui qui nous flatte soit jamais celui qui nous flatte le plus*. It might be thought that this mean opinion of Laura's taste would tend to diminish the force of his attachment to her; but we must remember that Zeluco's love was entirely sensual: he thought Laura's face the most beautiful, and her person the most piquant, he had ever seen. The qualities of her mind he regarded not.

The attentive and complaisant manner in which Madame de Seidlitz always behaved to him, convinced him that she enjoyed her good opinion: he perceived also, that she had a taste for show and magnificence, and was a little out of countenance sometimes on account of the want of those superfluities which custom has rendered almost necessary in a certain rank of life. On this weakness he founded an opinion, that with proper management, she might be gradually brought to wink at the connexion he wished to form with her daughter: a piece of complaisance, however shocking, which he had already met with in more than one instance.

He resolved therefore to begin his horrid design by fixing an obligation of an important nature on her, unknown both to her daughter and Signora Sporza: he waited on her one forenoon, when he knew the two other ladies were abroad; and preluding what he had to propose with many apologies, he said, that the high esteem he had for, and the sincere concern he took in her interest, had prompted him to make some inquiry into her circumstances; and that he was much grieved to find they were so ill-proportioned to her merit. As your husband, continued he, belonged to another service, I find it will be difficult to have this remedied by the bounty of this court; but you will oblige me infinitely (especially if you will agree to keep it a secret from every other person without exception), by permitting me to be your banker for an annual sum, till such time at least as your own affairs are better arranged. So saying, he presented her with a note of very considerable value.

The blood mounted into Madame de Seidlitz's face at this proposal, and she immediately replied, with an air of surprise and displeasure, that she was sorry he had taken the trouble of making an inquiry of such a nature; that he had received an erroneous account of her affairs, which were not in a situation to justify her in accepting assistance of that kind from any person; but more particularly from one with whom she had no natural connexion. She added, that she should always have a proper sense of the obligation which, unexpected and unsolicited on her part, he had already conferred on her; but she was determined to be exceedingly cautious of permitting a load to be increased which she had already felt too heavy for her to bear without great uneasiness. Having said this, she withdrew, throwing such a look at Zeluco as his conscious heart interpreted into a suspicion of his base

design. He remained some time fixed to the spot, and then returned to his own house in much disturbance of mind.

He was now convinced that he had made a false estimate of the character of Madame de Seidlitz; that he had betrayed his scheme on her daughter, and dreaded that he should be deprived of the pleasure of visiting her any more, without which he felt he could enjoy little comfort or repose.

After much reflection, and after forming and rejecting various plans to remove the effects of this rash step, and re-instate himself in the good opinion of Madame de Seidlitz, he at length sent her the following letter:

I AM much afraid, my dear Madam, that I have offended your delicacy by my proposal this morning, which I am now convinced was made in too abrupt a manner, owing to my having received some vexatious news of a domestic nature, which will oblige me to embark for Messina within a few days. Having little expectation of returning to Naples, I grasped too eagerly at the happiness of serving a person I so highly esteem, and whom there is reason to fear I shall never see again. I hope you will forgive my precipitate zeal; for, however just your reasons may be for rejecting the satisfaction aimed at, I hope you will never have any for denying some share of your regard to him who is, with the highest esteem, and the warmest prayers for your happiness,

Madam,
Your most obedient
and most humble servant,
ZELUCO.

Although Madame de Seidlitz's pride had been alarmed by Zeluco's proposal, she had no suspicion that it was dictated by any base motive; and therefore she was not without uneasiness, even before receiving this letter, lest she had behaved with too much loftiness to a well-meaning and friendly man. She became entirely of this opinion the moment she perused the letter; her candid mind was filled with remorse for her own behavior, and sorrow for his threatened departure.

She directly sent him a letter, apologizing for her behavior, and entreated him not to leave Naples without seeing her once more.

CHAPTER XXXI.

—Tamen ad mores natura recurrit
Dammato, fixa et mutari necesse.—
Juv. Sat. xiii. 229.

WHEN Signora Sporza and Laura returned from their airing, Madame de Seidlitz informed them that Zeluco had paid her a visit, and that he intended to leave Naples. She mentioned this in such a manner that they naturally thought the sole design of his visit had been to acquaint her with his sudden departure; this she did to prevent any inquiry concerning the real motive of his visit, which, in compliance with Zeluco's request, she intended to conceal.

Signora Sporza was greatly surprised at Zeluco's sudden resolution: it appeared unaccountable to her, who was convinced his affections centered at Naples, and did not believe that any business would appear of sufficient importance in the eyes of a man of his character and fortune, to draw him from the place where his affections were fixed.

Laura was uneasy because she saw her mother so; for, independent of that circumstance, she would have been pleased with the departure of a man whose company was disagreeable to her.

The reader need not be informed that Zeluco had no intention of leaving Naples, and that the story of vexatious news, which obliged him to embark for Sicily, was an invention, calculated to remove all suspicion of his real plan from the mind of Madame de Seidlitz, and to convince her, that his proposal could be dictated by pure benevolence alone; for if, previous to making it, he had already formed the resolution of quitting Italy, with no view of returning for several years, and little chance of ever seeing her or her daughter again, the offer must have been well intended, whether she thought it became her to accept it or not.

But it was necessary that he should seem in earnest before he sent the letter to Madame de Seidlitz; therefore he announced his intention to the domestics of his own family, ordered several things to be prepared and packed up, called in his debts, and ordered inquiry to be made about a proper vessel for transporting him and his suite. In short, he acted his part so well, that none of his acquaintance, except Signora Sporza, had any doubts of his intention.

When Zeluco received Madame de Seidlitz's answer to his letter, he began to resume his old opinions: his mind, habituated to hypocrisy and deceit, could not enter into the natural movements of an honest heart, apprehensive of having acted ungenerously, and throbbing with eagerness to make reparation, he imagined her answer displayed an inclination to accept of his offer, and thought her stately behavior had been assumed on purpose to enhance the value of her future acquiescence, or perhaps was a temporary triumph, with which the good lady chose to indulge her vanity; but having been driven to immediate decision by the unexpected news of his departure, she was now ready to capitulate on reasonable terms.

He did not continue long in this way of thinking; for when he waited on her the following day, and Madame de Seidlitz having repeated her apology for the coolness of her behavior at their last interview, he began to hint, though in a distant way, at a renewal of his former proposition; but was immediately stopped short, by her rejecting it with equal firmness, though with less anger than at first. She added, in the most obliging manner, that she had taken the liberty of requesting to see him: because she could not bear the thoughts of his leaving Naples after such a cold interview as their last, without

expressing that sense of gratitude which she should ever retain for his goodness to her on a late occasion, and without wishing him a good voyage.

There was so much virtuous dignity and unaffected candor and benevolence in the whole of her discourse and deportment, as overawed his insidious tongue, and checked every presumptuous hope that began to spring up in his breast.

At his taking leave, Madame de Seidlitz, with some degree of solemnity and fervor said, heaven direct you, sir, wherever you go, and bless you with all the prosperity and success which your disinterested conduct and benevolent character deserve! The conscience of Zeluco smote him at this petition, and he felt a pang sharp as the stiletto of the Portuguese.

Disappointed, humbled, and self-condemned, in broken accents, and with a faltering tongue, he was withdrawing, without having the assurance once to pronounce the name of Laura, when Signora Sporza and that young lady entered the room: even then he was unable to recover himself so far as to address them in his usual manner; after bowing to each, without uttering a word, he hurried out of the room.

His agitation spoke more powerfully in his favor with Madame de Seidlitz, than he could himself have done had he been ever so cool and recollected; that confusion which proceeded from disappointment, perfidy, and conscious guilt, she imputed to the sensibility of a benevolent heart, on being separated from friends, without the hope of seeing them again for a long time.

Laura, without being so fully convinced of its justice, acquiesced in the construction of her mother.

Signora Sporza could not account in a satisfactory manner for the behavior of Zeluco; but she was too much convinced of the selfishness of his disposition, to believe that he could be much affected with any thing unconnected with his own personal interest or pleasure.

He was under the necessity of continuing the preparations for his departure for some days; but on the arrival of the first vessel from Sicily, he pretended that he had received letters, informing him that the business which required his presence was happily and unexpectedly terminated; so that his voyage was no longer necessary. This news he allowed to reach the ladies in the common course of circulation, fearing that their delicacy might be hurt by his sending a formal message to acquaint them with it; as that would imply his thinking his motions of more importance to them, than they might incline to have believed: but on his waiting on them a few days after, he was highly pleased when Madame de Seidlitz chid him for omitting to send her a piece of intelligence which gave her much pleasure. He looked at Laura, in hopes of her showing marks of agreeing with her mother; but as she felt differently, she seemed as if she had not heard what her mother had said. Signora Sporza, looking slyly at Zeluco, said, I am less surprised than my friend, having all along had a prepossession that something would occur to prevent this voyage.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The importance of a man to himself.

ZELUCO was now on a better footing than ever with Madame de Seidlitz, visited her more frequently, and became more and more enamoured of her daughter. The natural gracefulness of her manner, the lively good sense of her conversation, and the winning sweetness of her temper, would have attracted the admiration of every man of sentiment, although these qualities had been connected with a face and person of the common kind. Even in the eyes of Zeluco, sunk as he was in sensuality and debased by vice, the filial affection, the graceful modesty, and benevolent heart of this amiable young woman, gave additional poignancy to those external beauties which hitherto he had esteemed as all that is valuable in woman.

From the observations which Zeluco had made on the conduct of mankind, confirmed by what passed within his own breast, his opinion was, that virtue was mere varnish and pretext; and whatever apparent disinterestedness, generosity, or self-denial, there were in the conduct of any person, that if the whole could be chemically analyzed and reduced to their original elements, self-interest would be found at the bottom of the crucible: he was, besides, of a suspicious temper, and convinced that for the most of their actions mankind have secret reasons very different from the ostensible. If, therefore, the motive announced was of a generous or disinterested nature, he never believed it to be the real one, but turned his eyes in search of a motive where self-interest predominated.

In the present case, not being able to conjecture any advantage that could accrue to Laura from behaving with so much reserve to him (as to disliking him, he thought that impossible), nor any benefit which Madame de Seidlitz could derive from rejecting his proposal, especially as he had annexed no condition to it; he labored to discover what could impel two women who were not devoid of common sense to act in such an irrational manner. And after much deliberate reflection, he at length imputed the whole of their conduct to a scheme concerted between the mother and daughter, with the aid of Signora Sporza, to take advantage of his passion for Laura, and, by assumed dignity in the one and reserve in the other, to allure him into a marriage.

Replete with this notion, he determined to be more sparing in his attentions to Laura, to pay his court with ostentatious assiduity to a young lady of family and considerable beauty then at Naples; and by alarming Madame de Seidlitz and Laura with jealousy, and the fear of losing him for ever, induce them both to more complaisance.

He acted the part he intended so well, that within a short time it was generally believed at Naples that a treaty of marriage was on foot between Zeluco and the young lady in question; and he took particular care that Signora Sporza and

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Maternal affection.—Filiol duty.

THAT very evening Madame de Seidlitz took occasion to mention Zeluco to Laura, in terms agreeable to the good opinion she had formed of him, and the gratitude which she felt for the good office he had done her; and then added, she was convinced he would make a good husband.

Perhaps he might, said Laura, to a woman who loved him.

A man of generosity and worth must command the esteem of a virtuous woman, answered Madame de Seidlitz; and that, my dear, is often a stronger pledge of happiness in the married state, than the fantastical notions some women form of love.

Alarmed at the significant manner with which Madame de Seidlitz pronounced this, Laura, looking earnestly at her mother, cried, heavens! what does this mean?—has Signor Zeluco—sure he cannot think—

Yes, Laura, said Madame de Seidlitz, he thinks of you, and you only;—and this day he offered to make you mistress of his hand and fortune.

The blood immediately forsook Laura's face; she became as pale as snow, and seemed ready to faint.

My dearest child, exclaimed Madame de Seidlitz; what is the matter?

Oh! mother, said Laura, in a feeble voice, will you give me to a man I cannot love?—will you order your Laura—?

How can you talk so, child? said the mother—when did I order you?

Alas! said Laura, is not every indication of your wishes obeyed as an order by me?

For which reason, replied Madame de Seidlitz, I have no wishes but those which you can with pleasure obey.

It has been the happiness of my life, said Laura, to obey,—to anticipate your wishes, when it was in my power; but can you wish me married to a man whom I cannot love? or would you make such a request to the person who has obliged you, as to give him a wife without fortune, and without the least affection, without even—

For heaven's sake, my dear, do not talk in that manner, interrupted Madame de Seidlitz; you well know, I can desire nothing but what is for your good; but I beg you may hear me calmly, your decision on this matter is of great importance. You must be sensible of the sad reverse of fortune which has befallen you by the death of your father; his rising prospects in the army, his generous spirit, and above all his love for us both, have accustomed you to a style of life very different from what our present circumstances can support.

In the meanwhile, Signor Zeluco, a man of a friendly and benevolent character, and of a vast fortune, offers you his hand, and is ready to rescue you from all the inconveniences of poverty, and to place you in a state of affluence which you never before experienced. But you say, you do not love him. Well, if that continues to be the case, there is no more to be said; I shall never desire you to give your hand to a man whom you cannot love;—but I fear, my dear, you are misled by false and romantic notions on that head.

Is there any thing unreasonable or romantic, said Laura, in refusing my hand to a man who in no degree interests my heart? But you have alluded to the inconveniences of our present confined circumstances,—as affecting me in a more particular manner. I know not, continued Laura, if I understood my mother right?

The narrowness of our circumstances are a source of unhappiness to me on your account only, replied Madame de Seidlitz.

From this moment then, my dear madam, let that source be dried up, said Laura; for our present circumstances, confined as they are, give me no uneasiness; and be assured, that if you can bear them cheerfully, all the inconveniences attending them are bliss to me, in comparison with affluence as the wife of Zeluco.

Well, my dearest girl, I have done; you have said enough, and more than enough;—you shall never again hear him mentioned as a lover by me.

My dear mother, cried Laura, with tears of affection, how can I requite you for this goodness?

By following the dictates of your own virtuous heart, said Madame de Seidlitz; be you happy, my dear child, and I am contented.

I am happy! exclaimed Laura, throwing her arms around her mother's neck; how can I be but happy while I am blessed with such a parent?

Madame de Seidlitz then informed her daughter, that Zeluco had desired to have an audience of her by himself, in which he would make his proposals; which she had agreed to.

Laura begged with earnestness that her mother would take on herself the office of acquainting Zeluco with her determined sentiments. But Madame de Seidlitz urged her promise, and that Zeluco might consider himself as disrespectfully used; adding, with a smile, you must allow me, my dear, to carry one point in this negotiation. Laura acquiesced, and next morning mustered up all her resolution for a scene which she thought on with a good deal of uneasiness.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Si on croit aimer sa maîtresse pour l'amour d'elle on est bien trompé." *Rechefoucault.*

ZELUCO called at Madame de Seidlitz's the day following: after he had waited a few minutes alone, Laura entered the room, pale and in evident emotion, without looking him in the face, pointed to a chair, and desired him to be seated, placing herself at the same time at a respectful distance.

No doubt, said he, your mother has informed you, madam,

of the sentiments with which your beauty and merit have inspired me, and with the purport of this visit.

She has, sir, said Laura, and I am sensible of the honor your good opinion does me; the obligation you conferred on my mother demands, and has my warmest gratitude;—but—

Zeluco, construing Laura's confusion in his own favor, stepped across the room, seized her shrinking hand, and exclaimed, talk not of gratitude for trifles, my whole fortune is now at your disposal; and you will, I hope, name an early day that the rites of the church may unite us for ever.

The security implied in this abrupt address offended the delicacy and roused the spirits of Laura: she disengaged her hand, and throwing an indignant look at Zeluco, said, carry your fortune, sir, to some woman more desirous and more deserving of it; I have no claim to share it with you on either account.

Zeluco, surprised and piqued at her manner, answered, I am sorry you seem offended, madam; I hope there is nothing in the proposal I have made to hurt your pride.

Without giving grounds for an accusation of pride, replied Laura, I may be surprised at being pressed to fix a day for a purpose I never agreed to, and never shall.

I understood, madam, that your mother had been so obliging as to explain my sentiments and plead my cause; having her approbation, I flattered myself I should have yours, and that you would be willing to abridge unnecessary delay.

My mother, sir, has a warm and grateful heart, and is penetrated with a sense of your services on a late occasion; I hope I also have becoming sentiments on that head, of which the best proof I can give, is by assuring you at once, that it is not in my power to repay the partiality you express for me in the manner you desire. I hope, therefore, you will here terminate a pursuit which must be vain, and is so little worth your while.

I was informed, madam, said Zeluco, that your heart was disengaged.

You were informed rightly, said Laura.

What then are your objections to me? said he.

Since the reasons which determine me, said Laura, seem valid to those to whom I think myself accountable, I must be excused from an explanation to any other person.

The possibility of his honorable proposals being rejected, had never once entered into the contemplation of Zeluco; on the contrary, he was convinced that all her former reserve was assumed for no other purpose but to allure him to this point; on finding them refused in so decided a manner, his heart swelled with anger, which he could with difficulty suppress.

Laura, perceiving the struggle, added, I do not mean to offend you, sir; but I think it my duty, on such an occasion, to assure you, that my determination is unalterable. I sincerely wish you happiness with a more deserving woman.

You are infinitely obliging, madam, said he, his eyes flashing with rage.

I must beg to be excused from attending you any longer, said she, retiring with some degree of precipitation.

She was no sooner gone, than Zeluco struck his clenched fist twice, with frantic violence, on his forehead, and rushed out of the house, before Madame de Seidlitz, who meant to have waited on him, had time to reach the room.

The grateful heart of this well-disposed lady was hurt when she understood that Zeluco had left her house in so much displeasure; and even after hearing her daughter's account of the scene which had passed between them, she thought that Laura ought to have softened her refusal, and borne more calmly those signs of vexation and disappointment which Zeluco had displayed: which, after all, my dear, added Madame de Seidlitz, are proofs of his love.

They might have been mistaken for marks of hatred, said Laura, and could not have been more disagreeable to me had I known them to be really such.

When Zeluco returned to his own house, he poured out a thousand execrations against the sex in general, and the pride and folly of Laura in particular; abused his servants, and displayed many of those ridiculous extravagances which wounded vanity and disappointment prompt men of peevish and passionate tempers to exhibit. But after having sworn, raged, stamped, bounced and blasphemed for two hours together, he recollected at last, what was very obvious from the first, that these extravagances would not bring him nearer his object. The fermentation excited by this unexpected disappointment settled in a gloomy reserve, during which he avoided society, and passed great part of his time in meditating some scheme for getting Laura into his power, that he might at once satisfy his desires and his revenge.

He once thought of causing her to be seized, forced aboard a vessel, and of passing over with her to Tunis; and he had some conversation with a bold enterprising fellow, who commanded a trading vessel, then at Naples, was well acquainted with the Barbary coast, and had lived a considerable time at Tunis: this man, Zeluco had first become acquainted with at Palermo, and had taken great pleasure in listening to his adventures. He sent for him on the present occasion, and stating a case from which the seaman could not guess at the scheme he meditated, he sounded him with respect to the practicability of some such plan.

But while his mind was agitated with this villainous project, he occasionally visited Madame de Seidlitz, who by the complacency of her behavior to him, endeavored, as much as lay in her power, to compensate for that of Laura, which she could not help thinking had been too harsh to a person who had conducted himself in so obliging a manner to them both. And she made no scruple of declaring to him, that she would have been better pleased that Laura had listened more favorably to his suit; which possibly might be the case at some future period. She advised him, however, not to urge her further at present; adding, that she would acquaint him, as

soon as she perceived any change in the sentiments of Laura in his favor.

This discourse of Madame de Seidlitz tended to turn the mind of Zeluco from the mad and vindictive projects with which it was occupied, the difficulties and danger of which also became more apparent to himself as he cooled.

But still feeling himself in an awkward and mortified situation, and unable to suppress the over-boilings of wrath and indignation at the sight of Laura, he determined on making another tour through Italy, and perhaps through France, in the hopes that a variety of objects would dissipate his vexation from the constant contemplation of one. When he arrived at Rome, he endeavored to extinguish a passion which gave him unremitting pain, by plunging into that current of dissipation and debauchery from which he had of late abstained. This expedient had no better effect than his rage, excoations, and blasphemy had formerly produced. Invited to every splendid assembly and magnificent entertainment, indulging every gratification of sense, he seemed to be passing his days in joy, and his nights in pleasure; but was in reality the victim of chagrin and of disgust. His passion appeared to gain fresh force from the efforts made to subdue it; and the lovely form of the virtuous Laura, ever present in his mind, obscured even in his vitiated imagination all the allurements of those meretricious charms by which he endeavored to efface it.

Unable to pursue his original plan, or to support a longer absence from Laura, after pouring out a fresh torrent of execrations against her, he sent an apology to the Cardinal B——, with whom he was engaged to dine, ordered post-horses, and returned to Naples with the rapidity of a courier.

Madame de Seidlitz received him with her usual politeness, but gave no hint of any change of sentiment on the part of Laura. He had the additional mortification, in a short time, to find, that though the mother seldom allowed herself to be denied when he called, yet it frequently happened that Laura did not appear during the whole of his visit.

While Zeluco's aim was seduction, all that he had expected from Signora Sporza was connivance; when he was afterwards driven to the resolution of making proposals of marriage, he considered her mediation as unnecessary, being fully convinced that his terms would be accepted as soon as made. Disappointed in both his plans, and excessively galled at Laura's not appearing when he visited her mother, he again had recourse to Signora Sporza, spoke highly of his admiration of her young friend, and ended a very pathetic harangue, by swearing that his passion was, and had ever been, of the purest and most honorable nature.

Of what other could it be, Signor? said she. Could any body suspect you wicked enough to attempt an affair of gallantry with a woman of birth, who is unmarried?

He agreed that nothing could be more horrid than such an attempt; but that he had offered her his hand and fortune in the most respectful manner, which, to his great surprise and vexation she had rejected.

It is natural, replied Signora Sporza, that you should be vexed on such an occasion; but there are so many instances of women refusing men who offer to marry them, that I see no reason for your being greatly surprised. It was with difficulty that Zeluco could conceal the anger which glowed in his breast at this observation of Signora Sporza: after a short pause, however, he said there was reason to fear that Laura had conceived a prejudice against him; and entreated Signora Sporza, with whom he knew that Laura was quite confidential, to advise him what was the best method of removing this prejudice, and rendering her more favorable to his wishes.

I know of no qualities, replied Signora Sporza, by which a man has a greater chance of making a favorable impression on the mind of Laura, than by sincerity, good temper, and benevolence; and were I to offer any advice, it would be, that you should rely on these, and these only.

Although Signora Sporza pronounced this with a serious countenance, the irony did not escape the observation of Zeluco: without seeming to take notice of it, he laid it up in his memory, and thanked her for her good counsel; adding, that he was sorry to perceive that Laura seldom appeared when he visited Madame de Seidlitz; that probably this happened from her suspecting that he would renew his suit; he begged that Signora Sporza would assure her, that he intended not to tease her with solicitations; but that he earnestly wished for the happiness of being received by Madame de Seidlitz on the general footing of a friend; which he could not think was the case, when any of her family thought themselves obliged to be absent when he visited her.

Signora Sporza was so pleased with the apparent reasonableness and humility of this request, that the rancor and indignation which lurked in the breast of him who made it, entirely eluded her notice. She promised to acquaint her friends with what he had said; and the following day sent Zeluco an invitation to meet them both at her house.

Madame de Seidlitz joined with Signora Sporza in representing to Laura, that there was no necessity for her behaving with peculiar reserve to Zeluco after the declaration he had made; and she agreed to behave as they required, without arguing the point; although she would have been infinitely better pleased to have kept herself secluded from the company of Zeluco.

Zeluco now had frequent opportunities of being in company with the object of his wishes. He passed whole evenings with the mother and daughter, attentively studied the characters of both, and endeavored to adapt his behavior, and every sentiment he uttered, to what he thought would please them most; and notwithstanding the restraint to which this obliged him to submit, he had, on the whole, a sensation in their company more agreeable than in any other society, however jovial or voluptuous. And had not his own character

been intrinsically vicious, the continuation of the self-command he was thus obliged to assume, and the efforts he made to please, might, perhaps, have effected a favorable change in his own disposition: for nothing is more powerful in alluring the heart of man to virtue, than the society of amiable, accomplished, and virtuous women.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"—Novas artes, nova pectore versat
Concilia.—" Virg.

It was already remarked, that a portion of vanity formed part of the character of Madame de Seidlitz, and sometimes obscured the lustre of her best qualities; she was apt too frequently in conversation to introduce the names of persons of very high rank, with whom her husband had been intimate in Germany, and who had occasionally visited her when she resided in that country. She paid a minute attention to the ornaments of her person, and sometimes adopted a style of dress which suited her better at an earlier period of her life. Having been distinguished for beauty in her youth, of which there was some remains, she seemed more pleased with the share which she still retained, than sensible that far the larger portion was fled. This error in calculation many women fall into who have not the good qualities of Madame de Seidlitz to compensate it; for her general deportment was genteel and elegant, her temper cheerful and complacent, her disposition benevolent and generous.

In Laura Zeluco observed a depth of reflection and solidity of understanding, which he thought incompatible with her sex, and is very uncommon at her age. This was joined to an elegant simplicity of manner, and a total want of affectation equally uncommon; ever ready to remark, and fond of displaying, the accomplishments of others, she seemed insensible of those with which she herself was so eminently adorned.

No daughter ever had a stronger sense than Laura of what she owed to her mother; the affectionate care and solicitude with which Madame de Seidlitz had watched over her infancy, and the unceasing attention she bestowed on her through life, were, in the mind of this young lady, obligations never to be repaid; and independent of all sense of obligation or filial duty, she had a high esteem for her mother's personal qualities. Neither gratitude nor esteem, however, prevented her seeing the weakness above enumerated: her clearness of sight was to her, in this particular, a source of uneasiness; and if she suspected any other person of being equally clear-sighted, she could not help feeling a temporary dislike to that person. As often as any of the little failings above enumerated began to make their appearance, she endeavored, with all the address in her power, to turn away the attention of the company, and with theirs, she would have been glad, had it been in her power, to have turned away her own.

But it was her happiness to reflect upon, and her delight to display, every graceful and good quality that belonged to her mother. Easy even to indifference about the common forms of respect when they regarded herself, she had a jealous sensibility of the smallest neglect or want of attention to her mother.

Zeluco remarked this peculiarity in the character of Laura; he saw that the compliments he sometimes ventured to pay to herself were always heard with indifference, and sometimes with disgust; while every just and well-founded compliment paid to her mother seemed to give pleasure to the daughter: declining, therefore, the beaten road of insinuation, he tried to gain access to the heart of the one by the praises he bestowed on the other.

It behoved him, however, to be on his guard, in what manner, and on what occasion, he risked his compliments; it was necessary they should seem at once just and *à-propos*. He once mistook his aim so far as to compliment Madame de Seidlitz for a quality she certainly did not possess, and was instantly warned of his error by such a glance of indignation from the expressive eye of Laura, as prevented his ever repeating it.

But as often as, on proper occasions, he remarked with justice and delicacy on the good and amiable qualities that really belonged to Madame de Seidlitz, which he frequently did with equal penetration and address, it was evident that Laura listened with looks of more complacency than she ever displayed when he spoke on any other subject. He acquired by study and use such a masterly manner of dwelling on this favorite theme, that Laura's aversion began to diminish; and she could not help feeling sentiments of approbation and goodwill to the person who furnished her with so sweet a source of enjoyment.

This alteration in the sentiments of Laura was observed with more pleasure by her mother than by Signora Sporza, whose esteem for Laura and her dislike of Zeluco had increased with her acquaintance with both. Her dislike of the latter, however, did not proceed entirely from her own penetration; she had received such an account of him from a female correspondent at Palermo, as confirmed and greatly augmented her original ill opinion, and made her averse to the idea of his ever becoming the husband of her young friend, notwithstanding the temptation in point of fortune for such an alliance. But being convinced that her mentioning her sentiments on this subject to the mother or daughter, would prevent their ever again having any connexion with Zeluco, she therefore was silent; at the same time determined, if it should be necessary, to speak in sufficient time.

But although Signora Sporza concealed from Madame de Seidlitz and her daughter the opinion she had of Zeluco, her real sentiments were detected by the jealous and penetrating eyes of the man himself. There is perhaps no sentiment which it is so difficult to conceal from the person who is the

object of it, as violent hatred: a moderate adept in the art of dissimulation may impose on those for whom he feels no esteem, or whom he even holds in contempt; and, if he has an interest in it, may persuade them that he has a high respect or even veneration for them; this, in some measure, accounts for so many people of the highest rank being ignorant of the true rate at which they are estimated. For the indications of contempt are easily restrained, and those of admiration as easily assumed; but it requires the powers of a finished hypocrite to hide hatred or aversion. Such strong feelings it is difficult to control, and prevent their discovering themselves by some involuntary appearance in the countenance or manner. It is not surprising, therefore, that Zeluco, became fully convinced that Signora Sporza had a very unfavorable opinion of him, and was averse to his ever succeeding with Laura. The rancor which gathered in his breast on this discovery was of the most deadly kind; but he endeavored to hide it till he should find a proper occasion of giving it vent; and being, notwithstanding her sex, a better dissembler than Signora Sporza, he for a long time succeeded,

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Full oft by holy feet our ground was trod,
Of clerks good plenty here you mote espy.
A little, round, fat, oily man of God,
Was one I chiefly mark'd among the fry:
He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
And shone all glittering with ungolly dew,
If a tight damsel chaunc'd to trippen by;
Which when observ'd, he shrunk into his mew,
And straight would recollect his piety anew." Thomson.

ALTHOUGH Zeluco perceived with pleasure the change which had taken place in Laura's behavior to him, he did not choose to rely entirely on his own address; but as he now believed he had no aid to expect from Signora Sporza, he resolved to seek other allies, and even attempted to draw them from the church itself, a quarter in which one would think he had little interest.

Father Mulo was an ecclesiastic more remarkable for the rigidity of his manners and opinions than the depth of his intellects. Father Pedro was a monk of a different order, indulgent in his disposition, agreeable in conversation, naturally shrewd, and what piety he possessed was far from being of a morose kind. He had adopted the ecclesiastical profession from necessity, not inclination, and he endeavored to assume an air of gravity and self-denial, which was equally discordant with the turn of his mind, the rotundity of his person, and to his rosy complexion, all of which announced him *Episcopus de grege porcus*. The warmth of Father Pedro's constitution had formerly drawn him into some scrapes, from which it required all his address to disengage himself, and rendered him exceedingly cautious ever after. He had behaved with peculiar circumspection ever since he had been at Naples; and being a man of more understanding than most of his brethren, he was chosen by Signora Sporza as her father confessor, and through her recommendation he now acted in the same capacity to her two friends, in preference to Father Mulo, who was their relation. In a short time, Father Pedro, whose manners were gentle and insinuating, gained the entire confidence of Madame de Seidlitz, and was rather well thought of by her daughter. Father Mulo was by no means pleased with the choice his relations had made; yet as they behaved to him in all other respects with much deference and attention, no open breach took place between the father and any of them on this account.

Zeluco having informed himself of the character of these two monks, and knowing their connexion with Madame de Seidlitz, he thought it might be of importance to gain them to his interest.

He began with Father Pedro, whose favor he endeavored to acquire by all the address and powers of insinuation he was master of, setting out by choosing him for his ghostly father; and to the gentle penance which he enjoined for the venial faults which Zeluco thought it expedient to confess, he frequently imposed upon himself a mulct in money, which he delivered into the hands of the father, to be applied to whatever pious use he thought proper.

This behavior on the part of Zeluco gave great satisfaction to Father Pedro, who not only received his visits with pleasure at his convent, but more frequently waited upon him at Zeluco's house.

After a pretty free repast, during which the father displayed much good humor and jovialness, Zeluco, seizing what he thought a lucky moment, informed him of his passion for Laura.

This ghostly father assuredly had never imagined that the sudden veneration which Zeluco professed for him, proceeded either from an admiration of his character or countenance; on the contrary, he had all along suspected its real source. He was not a man of very great delicacy of sentiment, and certainly was not troubled with prejudices of a superstitious nature; yet there were occasions on which he thought it expedient to affect as much terror for the horns of Satan as his brother Mulo was really impressed with. Zeluco had no sooner mentioned his passion for Laura, than the monk started as if a culverin had unexpectedly exploded at his ear, displaying as much astonishment and horror in his countenance, as if the devil had appeared before him in full uniform, with his cloven feet, longest tail, and largest pair of horns.

What is the matter with you, my good father? said Zeluco? do you perceive any thing unnatural or extraordinary in my desiring to be united in holy wedlock with a virtuous and beautiful young lady?

The father, although he had long perceived Zeluco's fondness for Laura, had never heard of his proposing marriage to her, nor had he any idea that such was his intention. When Zeluco mentioned his love, the father took it for granted that

he was about to request his aid on a different system; but finding that he really intended marriage, the monk began to imagine that he had played off his pantomime a little inadvertently, and was at a loss how to give a plausible account of his own affected surprise; he endeavored to color it however as well as he could, by saying, that as his business with Zeluco was of a spiritual nature, he could not help being very much surprised at the mention of a thing so different from what he was accustomed to have any concern in.

I do humbly hope, my worthy father, said Zeluco, that you will think you have a natural concern in this, as I can assure you my happiness not only in this world, but very possibly in the next, depends on my being able to prevail on this young lady to accept of my hand; for my heart is so fixed upon her, that I do not know what desperate measures I may be driven to, if she continues obstinately to refuse me.

The monk seemed to soften by degrees. Zeluco gave him a full account of the proposals he had made, the settlements he had offered, Laura's unaccountable obstinacy; concluding by informing the monk, that he had laid apart a sum of money which, in case of success in his honorable proposals, he would request the father to accept, and appropriate to whatever pious or useful purpose he thought most expedient; but on this express condition, that it should remain an everlasting secret to all the rest of the world; because, added he, an ostentatious display of such donations destroys, in my opinion, any little merit there may be in making them.

The father agreed to this last condition with some seeming difficulty, praised Zeluco's modesty and charitable disposition, and finally assured him of all the assistance in his power. In the first place, said he, I will use my influence out of friendship to you; secondly, from the regard I have for Madame de Seidlits and the young lady herself, who so inversely opposes her own happiness; and lastly, and above all, I will use my interest in your favor for the sake of religion and the poor, as both must be benefited by the success of your honorable views.

This ecclesiastic, partly from probity and partly from prudence, would have rejected a bribe to assist in any project which he thought wicked or unlawful; but he had no scruple in allowing himself to be well rewarded for doing what he approved, and would of himself have been happy to promote without any bribe at all.

Indeed he had no notion that Madame de Seidlits or her daughter had a serious intention of standing out against a match which he thought so advantageous for both. He imputed the refusal to affectation, caprice, or a desire of indulging a few feminine airs; and he had a meaner opinion of Zeluco's understanding, on account of his being in this manner the dupe of a little female vanity.

And so impatient was he that the poor should reap the fruits of Zeluco's promised liberality, that the first time he found Madame de Seidlits alone, he expressed much surprise that she had never told him of Zeluco's addresses to her daughter.

Madame de Seidlits replied, that after Laura had given her negative, she thought it best not to mention a subject which might be disagreeable to Signor Zeluco, and was so foreign to those in which the father was usually employed.

It is true, replied Pedro, I am principally interested in your spiritual concerns, but by no means indifferent to the temporal welfare of your family.

Madame de Seidlits then informed him of all the particulars.

I have such an opinion of Signora Laura's filial duty and affection, said Pedro, that I am convinced, if you were to press this matter earnestly upon her, she would consent.

It is not impossible but she might, said Madame de Seidlits, for which reason I shall be particularly careful not to press her.

Father Pedro expressed astonishment at her taking so little concern in an affair of such importance to her daughter's happiness.

It is because it is of so much importance to her happiness, that I leave it to her own judgment, said Madame de Seidlits; Laura is endowed with prudence and good sense, and she is certainly the best judge of her own feelings; if Zeluco ever becomes more agreeable to her, importunity would be superfluous; and if he does not, it would be cruel; besides, I have given her my word never to urge her on the subject, and I will assuredly adhere to my engagement.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"For he a rope of sand could twist,
As tough as learned Sorbonist.
And weave fine cobwebs fit for scull
That's empty when the moon is full;
Such as take lodgings in a head
That's to be let unfurnished."

Butler.

THE father was prevented from reply by Laura's entering the room with Father Mulo. Before any account is given of the conversation which this venerable man introduced, it is necessary to throw a retrospective glance on incidents which occurred long before: from this an idea may be formed of the characters of Colonel Seidlits, and others connected with our purpose.

Without recapitulating the circumstances by which the colonel and his lady became first acquainted, it is sufficient to observe, that their marriage took place before the father knew anything of the matter; but he expressed infinite concern, and probably felt some, on hearing that his relation was the wife of a heretic.

When she went with her husband to Germany, the zealous father continued from time to time to remind her in his letters of the dangers she incurred in a land of heresy, and furnished her with the best arguments he had at his disposal,

to enable her to adhere to the religion in which she was bred, stimulating her at the same time to attempt the conversion of her husband, by which she would acquire immortal glory, effect her husband's salvation, and secure to herself the comfort of his company both in this life, and that which is to come.

The father being infinitely delighted with both the style and arguments of those letters, he could not deny himself the gratification of showing copies of them to several of his acquaintance; and as the intention of showing them could not be mistaken, his acquaintance in general were good-natured enough to praise them to the monk's contentment; one old maiden aunt of Madame de Seidlits's, however, whose zeal for religion and hatred to heretics increased with her years, seemed to approve of the correspondence less than any other person to whose inspection he had submitted it. When Father Mulo hinted this to her, she told him that she was so provoked at the odious heretic who had seduced her niece, that it was not in her power to wish in earnest for his conversion, for she could not bear even to hear his name mentioned; and she was very certain she should faint at the sight of him whenever she met him, yet it even in heaven.

But the father had too much ardor for making converts, to follow the suggestions of this virgin; he therefore continued to transmit such morsels of eloquence as, in his opinion, could not fail to operate the conversion of Colonel Seidlits.

But the reverend father's zeal being far more conspicuous than his arguments were convincing, Madame de Seidlits never thought proper to communicate them to her husband; while he, on his part, left his lady, without molestation, in the full enjoyment of her religious opinions, and at perfect liberty to worship God in the manner which her conscience approved. This he had promised when he married her; and he would have thought it inconsistent with honor to have tried to bring her over to his own persuasion, even although he had been certain of succeeding. The colonel has been blamed for this by many zealous protestants: we do not mean to approve or censure his conduct in this particular, but only mention the fact, leaving it to better judges to decide whether he was blame-worthy or not.

Madame de Seidlits herself, who was pleased with all her husband's behavior to her, was peculiarly delighted with what she called his delicacy in this point; and when Father Mulo insisted peremptorily in one of his letters on knowing whether she had ever made any attempt to convert her husband, or or had shown him the forcible reasoning contained in his letters to her; she was obliged to acknowledge that she had done neither, and gave for her reason, that her husband having left her at liberty on the subject of religion, she thought it would be a bad requital in her to tease him.

Father Mulo, in answer, endeavored to demonstrate the weakness of that argument. It is not necessary to transcribe the whole of the father's letter; the following paragraph will, in all probability, be thought sufficient.

"It was natural enough in you, my dear madam, to apprehend that your own arguments would be too feeble to convince your husband; but it is surprising that you do not perceive, that those I provided you with are of a very different nature; indeed, they are such as seldom fail to persuade even the weakest minds. From this you may judge what impression they would make on a person of such good sense as you describe your husband to be.

"You say that it would be improper in you to tease him, because he never attempts to disturb you, nor allows any other person to trouble you on the subject of religion: but you do not distinguish, my dear madam, the great difference between the two cases. For your husband, indeed, to make any attempt, or to allow any to be made by others, for the purpose of seducing you from your religion to his, would not only be improper, but also highly criminal, and for this very sufficient reason, because it is criminal to draw any person whatever from truth to falsehood. But for you to labor without ceasing, to prevail on your deluded husband to abjure his own faith, and adopt yours, is in the highest degree meritorious; because it is highly meritorious to lead any person whatever, and far more a beloved husband, from falsehood to truth, or from darkness to light.

"After having cleared up this point, I have only just to hint, that instead of reasoning upon what I inform you it is your duty to do, your safest course, my dearest cousin, will, for the future, be, to perform it implicitly, for reasoning is by no means what you shine in; and although you are generally allowed to be endowed with very good common sense, and sufficient understanding to conduct common affairs, take my word for it, your immortal soul is of too much consequence to be intrusted in your own hands."

This remonstrance had not the effect which, in Father Mulo's opinion, such forcible reasoning and such rational requests ought to have produced. What contributed, perhaps, to render Madame de Seidlits the more unwilling to touch on such subjects, was an incident of which she was informed about the very time when the monk was urging her so earnestly.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"No sooner could a hint appear,
But up he started to piqueer,
And made the stoutest yield to mercy,
When he engaged in controversy,
Not by the force of carnal reason,
But indefatigable teasing."

Butler.

A YOUNG protestant clergyman, a distant relation of Colonel de Seidlits, came about this time to Berlin. He had applied himself with ardor to the study of controversy. He was distinguished by his wonderful faculty of creating disputes where they were least expected, and by his invincible courage in maintaining them when begun: he often asserted,

and with truth, that he had never yielded an argument in his life. He was greatly admired for the flow of his pulpit eloquence, and the force of his reasoning by all who were previously of his own opinion. The longer this happy ecclesiastic lived, he seemed to be more confirmed in the favorable impression which, from his boyish years, he entertained of his own talents, and in his contempt for those of others; and became at length, so powerful in self-conceit, that he would, without hesitation, have engaged a whole conclave of his adversaries, being convinced not only that he could overturn all their arguments, but that the prejudices of education, the considerations of interest, and the allurements of ambition, must all yield to the irresistible strength of his demonstration.

This gentleman was sometimes invited to dinner by Colonel Seidlits, and was made welcome by his lady as often as she saw company in the evening.

In return for those civilities, he thought it incumbent on him to point out to her the absurdities of the popish religion, as preparatory to her conversion to Calvinism. With this view he was apt to introduce questions of a controversial nature, and at one time threw out a sneer at the doctrine of transubstantiation, in the presence of Madame de Seidlits.

This was repeated by one of the company to Colonel Seidlits, who, the next time he saw the clergyman alone, said to him mildly, I am not certain, my good sir, whether I ever informed you that my wife is of the Roman Catholic church.

You never informed me, replied the other; but it is long since I knew that Madame de Seidlits had that misfortune.

You may, if you please, leave her misfortunes to those who are more naturally concerned in them, said the colonel; but since you knew of what I was in hopes you had been ignorant, I own I am surprised that you could speak of one of the articles of her faith in the manner you did, in her presence.

I recollect what you allude to, said the clergyman; but really the article in question is so absurd and incomprehensible, that it is impossible to mention it otherwise than in terms of derision.

Pray, replied the colonel, do you believe in all the doctrines to be found in the public creeds and formularies of our own church?

That I do, replied the divine; and would die at the stake, were it necessary, avowing them.

Then I hope you have a better reason for thinking transubstantiation absurd, than merely its being incomprehensible?

There is no article in any of the protestant creeds so incomprehensible as that you mention, replied the divine.

I did not know there were degrees in incomprehensibility, said the colonel; if there is any proposition which I am quite unable to comprehend, it will be difficult to state another which I can comprehend less.

I will undertake to make you comprehend distinctly every article of the creeds you allude to, said the divine with an undaunted air.

Rather than impose such a task upon you, said the colonel, allow me to continue to believe them without fully comprehending them.

Well, colonel, you will do as you please; but surely it would afford you great satisfaction if your lady could be prevailed on to embrace the same religion that you profess.

No; I cannot say it would, replied the colonel, coldly.

Good God! that seems very unaccountable; Will you be so good as to tell me your reason? said the other.

Because the thing cannot happen, sir, without either my changing my religion, and I intend no such thing, or by my endeavoring to persuade my wife to change hers, which I have solemnly promised never to do: besides, I am certain that Madame de Seidlits is an amiable woman, and a most excellent wife, with the religion she professes; and there is no knowing what alteration a change of sentiments might make.

What alteration, but a favorable one, can accrue from renouncing one of the worst religions in the world for the best?

As to which is the worst, and which the best, said Seidlits, the world is much divided.

The protestant religion is gaining ground every day, said the clergyman; and there is reason to hope, that in a short time there will be more protestants in the world than papists.

That to be sure is very comfortable news, said the colonel; but it can have no weight in the present argument; because ever since the beginning of the world, there have been greater numbers devoted to false religions than to the true; and even now, if the question were to be decided by a plurality of voices, the religion of Mahomet might perhaps carry the palm both from the protestant and Roman catholic.

But you yourself are a protestant?—you at least prefer the protestant form of worship to all others? said the clergyman.

I certainly prefer no other form of worship to the protestant, replied the colonel.

Then I should be glad to know, said the clergyman, with a triumphant air, wherefore you prefer no other? the same arguments which convinced you, might convince your lady.

No, says the colonel, that they could not.

Why so? said the clergyman. By what powerful arguments were you persuaded to adhere to the protestant religion?

By this powerful argument, replied the colonel, that I was born in Berlin, and bred at Konigsberg.

That answer smells of infidelity, colonel, and implies that you consider religion merely as an affair of geography, and of little or no importance in the world, said the clergyman.

It implies more than I intended then, replied Seidlits; for although I do think that nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thousand of mankind are determined in the religion they

profess by the place of their birth and education, I do not infer from thence that religion is of no importance; on the contrary, I am convinced that those who cherish religion, perform the relative duties of life in the most conscientious manner.

So you put all religions on the same footing? said the clergyman.

By no means, answered Seidlitz; I know indeed of no religion which does not inculcate morality; but as I have not had any opportunity of observing the influence of other religions on men's conduct, I speak of the Christian religion only;—which, if I am not mistaken, contributes greatly to render mankind better and happier, even in this life.

You speak of the reformed religion, I presume? said the clergyman; for as to the absurd tenets of the Roman catholic creed, it is impossible for you, or any man of sense, to respect them.

I speak not of the creeds which, since the Christian era, have been composed by the fathers of either church, replied the colonel; I have not leisure, perhaps not understanding, sufficient to weigh or compare them with due precision. My observation regards only the precepts given, and the example set, by the Author of Christianity himself, and in which both churches are agreed. The good effect which a due impression of those divine precepts has upon the mind, seems, I confess, very evident to me, whether the individuals on which it operates are Roman catholics or protestants.

That you, by accident, have met with Roman catholics who were reckoned good moral men, I shall not dispute, said the minister; but that any part of their goodness proceeded from their religion, is what I can never admit.

Why not? said the colonel; the moral precepts of both religions are the same.

The spirit of those who profess them are very different, however, resumed the minister. When did the protestants display the same spirit of persecution that the papists have so often done?

Let us remember, replied Seidlitz, that the church of Rome was established in power when the first reformers began to attack its doctrines; that an attack on its doctrines endangered the power and riches of its clergy; that it is natural for mankind, when they have long been in possession of power and wealth, to be exceedingly unwilling to relinquish them; and the clergy do not form an exception to this general rule: they, as well as others, are apt to be extremely angry with those who attempt to dispossess them; besides, let us recollect that all established governments think they have a right to use severities against revolting subjects, whatever good grounds those subjects have had for revolting, and—

But remember, interrupted the clergyman, the perfidy and cruelty displayed by the Roman catholics in the massacre of Saint Bartholomew—think of the shocking reign of the gloomy bigoted Philip, and the enormities of his unrelenting general, the Duke of Alva.

I do think of them with horror, said the colonel, and I have no mind to palliate such dreadful instances of human wickedness and delusion. I only meant to hint, that those ought not to have credit for not displaying the same spirit, who were not in possession of the same power. I am willing to believe, however, that with equal power they would not have committed equal excesses; though I am sorry to say that instances might be mentioned, which create a suspicion that more power would have perverted the spirit of some of the most distinguished reformers, and might possibly have the same effect on their successors. It is therefore fortunate for the clergy of Holland, Switzerland, some parts of Germany, and other countries in Europe, that there is little danger of their degenerating from that cause.

I doubt much whether that is a fortunate circumstance, replied the clergyman; for although riches, power, and pomp have a mischievous effect when prostituted to the unworthy, yet they are suitable to the character we bear of the ambassadors from Heaven, and might give more weight to our admonitions.

Power and wealth are the great corruptors of the human heart, said Seidlitz, and might spread their baneful influence even to the ambassadors themselves; in which event, in lieu of that spirit of toleration, benevolence, and humility, which distinguishes them at present; a great accession of power and riches might gradually inspire them with pride and ambition, and render them at last little better than so many cardinals and popes.

Never, never, cried the clergyman; the spirit of protestantism is too averse to any such alteration.

The spirit of human nature, however, has a mighty tendency that way, said Seidlitz.

Learning and deep reflection correct the depraved tendencies of our nature, resumed the ecclesiastic, and leave the mind equally free from the degrading absurdities of superstition, and the impious sophistry of scepticism.

That is a state of mind devoutly to be wished, said Seidlitz. Is it not? cried the parson with exultation. You yourself allow that superstition is degrading to the mind of man? continued he.

I do, replied the colonel; and the more readily, as I never said it was otherwise.

Well, I will now prove to you, that scepticism is as uncomfortable as the other is degrading. I hope you have no pressing business at present, continued the parson, because to put the subject in a clear light, it will be necessary to divide it into three heads, and then subdivide each of these into four principal branches.

To begin then with the first and most important of those three heads.

Any degree of doubt or uncertainty, particularly on matters of high importance, has been considered in all ages as irksome, and—

I ask pardon for interrupting you, said the colonel; it is only to know whether you mean to prove, that to a well-disposed mind a state of certainty is more agreeable than any degree of doubt on religious subjects?

That is precisely what I am going to demonstrate, resumed the parson.

I will save you the trouble, said Seidlitz, for there is nothing of which I am more firmly convinced.

Is it not astonishing then, said the other, that so many should be so foolish as to persevere in a state of uncomfortable doubt?

Very astonishing indeed, said the colonel; especially as it is in every body's power to believe whatever will afford them most comfort.

I perceive, said the parson, you have perused my treatise upon the faculty of believing.

The colonel nodded.

I there clearly prove, that the Roman catholics have too much faith, and some sects of the protestants too little; and then carefully point out the golden medium which mankind ought to adhere to.

It is very fortunate for mankind, said the colonel, that you know it.

It is so, resumed the parson; for of this happy medium it may be said, more emphatically than of any thing else, *nescire malum est*.

If I am not mistaken, said Seidlitz, an answer to your work was published by a certain French abbé, who, according to the custom of his countrymen, seemed very fond of jesting.

That was a most abominable and a most provoking performance, cried the parson with great vehemence; but jests are no arguments, colonel.

No; nor arguments are no jests, said Seidlitz; yet this provoking abbé endeavored to make a jest of all your arguments.

There will be no jesting in hell, however, said the parson, with a vengeful aspect.

True, said the colonel; when you have once got him there, the laugh will be on your side—

But pray, colonel, resumed the minister, do you imagine that your lady has ever read my book?

I should rather think not, said the colonel.

What a pity! exclaimed the other; it would go a great way to cure her of many prejudices.

The remedy would be rather violent, said the colonel.

Perhaps it might seem a little so at first, rejoined the clergyman; but were I to converse with her on those subjects, I should begin in gentle terms.

That would be very proper, said the colonel.

The sooner I begin then the better, said the parson; after I have talked with her for a few hours, she will be able to decide between the two religions on rational principles.

I have already decided, on what I think rational principles, said the colonel, not to disturb her.

You have decided very erroneously, resumed this persevering ecclesiastic.

Let me entreat you, my good sir, interrupted the colonel, not to interfere in my domestic concerns, but to mind your own business.

I beg leave to inform you, Colonel Seidlitz, said the clergyman with a dignified air, that I consider the propagation of Gospel truths, and the unmasking of imposture, particularly those of the church of Rome, as my business; and I will embrace every opportunity of doing both, in spite of the united opposition of men and devils.

The colonel having looked very earnestly for some time at this violent reformer, at length said, I beg your excuse, sir, for having engrossed so much of your valuable time; it is a mistake I shall never fall into. So saying, he pulled off his hat, made a low bow, and walked away. The moment he entered his own house, he gave orders that his relation should be no more admitted.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Multa putans, sortemque animo miseratus iniquam."

Virg. *Æn.* l. vi.

THE attention which Colonel Seidlitz displayed in preventing his lady from being disquieted in her religious opinions, and the delicacy of his behavior on every occasion, was felt by her with affectionate gratitude. She was, however, by no means so easy in the contemplation of her husband being a protestant, as he was in that of her remaining a Roman catholic; and although the arguments of Father Mulo did not prevail on her to attempt his conversion, yet few things could have afforded her greater satisfaction than to have seen her husband adopt, from conviction, what she considered as the only true religion. But with what face could she speak to him on a subject which he never mentioned to her, and which he permitted no person whatever to disturb her about? Any attempt on her part to alter his sentiments, implied that she considered herself as wiser than he; whereas she only considered herself more fortunate, in having been educated in a better religion.

These and similar considerations, which occupied the mind of this worthy lady, were sometimes on the point of being sacrificed to the anguish she felt as often as the idea of her husband's continuing in heresy, and all the dreadful consequences, occurred to her terrified imagination; for the natural clearness of her understanding and the serenity of her disposition, were clouded and disturbed by the terrific aspect and unrelenting severity of some of the doctrines in which she had been instructed.

The anxiety of mind on her husband's account always increased in proportion to the hazards he was exposed to in the exercise of his profession, and became particularly

severe in the course of a tedious illness, into which he fell in consequence of a blow by the butt-end of a musket, which he received on his breast at the battle of Hochkirken. This contusion produced a spitting of blood, and was supposed to lay the foundation of that illness of which he afterwards died.

Soon after the battle, the colonel was carried to a place of safety. And Madame de Seidlitz, having obtained a pass from Marshal Daun, hastened to the village in which her husband was; where she attended him during his long illness with equal patience and tenderness. At one time he was, by the mistake of the physician, thought in immediate danger. The anxiety which had so long lurked within the breast of Madame de Seidlitz now became too violent for her to conceal; the very acute sorrow which she endured from the thought of losing a husband she highly esteemed and dearly loved, was absorbed in the keener anguish arising from the awful idea of the danger which threatened his immortal soul; and this impressed her with the more dread that it seemed to give him none.

Her terrors on this subject were augmented by a letter which she received from her indefatigable relation, Father Mulo; who, having heard of the colonel's illness, most charitably entreated her to exert herself now or never; as there was no possibility of salvation for her husband, unless he relinquished heresy, embraced the catholic faith, confessed his sins, and obtained absolution. One argument, he thought, proved the good policy of this measure beyond the power of reply; it was this:—The protestants themselves, said this ingenious priest, admit that well-meaning and virtuous persons may be saved, notwithstanding their dying in the Roman catholic persuasion; whereas we assert, that no heretic, however virtuous in other respects he may be, can enter into the kingdom of heaven; it is apparent, therefore, that your husband runs no risk in following your advice, but the greatest by neglecting it.

The agitation and confusion of Madame de Seidlitz's mind prevented her from seeing this kind of reasoning in the same light in which her good sense would have presented it in a calmer moment.

One day, therefore, when her apprehensions on the colonel's account were at the height, after much circumlocution, with infinite delicacy, but in the most pathetic terms, she communicated her fears to him, and concluded by urging him to forsake his own religion, and embrace that of the church of Rome.

Having heard her with the utmost attention, and some degree of surprise, the colonel said, I fear, my dear, you are too much alarmed on my account; but I assure you I have passed an uncommonly good night, and I feel myself better than I was yesterday. I am most exceedingly glad to hear it, said Madame de Seidlitz; but let this be no reason for preventing a measure of infinite importance, which cannot be taken too soon, but may be delayed till it is too late.

My dearest Theresa, said the colonel, taking hold of her hand, I view your present solicitude and importunity in the true light; I consider them as fresh proofs of that noble friendship and affection which has been the happiness of my life, and of which I ever had a grateful conviction; but I must assure you, that although I have never urged you, nor permitted any other person to urge you, on the same subject on which you now press me, it is not because I have less concern for your soul than you have for mine; nor is it from a want of partiality for the religion which I myself profess. From what motive then has your forbearance proceeded? said Madame de Seidlitz. From a conviction, replied he, that you are as certain of salvation in your religion as I can be in mine. You must believe then, said Madame de Seidlitz with quickness, that both religions are equally good. No, my love, that does not follow; for although I think there is much good in both, still I think my own is the preferable; yet, continued he gaily, as you possess so much more of yours than I do of mine, I imagine the superiority in quantity, will make up for the deficiency in quality, and render you as secure as you can wish.

My dear colonel, replied Madame de Seidlitz, is this a subject, or is this a proper occasion, for jesting?

I beg pardon, my dear, said the colonel, I will be very serious: in one great and essential point we have the happiness to be of one opinion; both religions agree, that it is our duty to live a life of integrity, and do all the good we can to our fellow-creatures.

For which reason, interrupted Madame de Seidlitz, I am so anxious to do the greatest good possible to him who is infinitely the dearest to me of all my fellow-creatures.

None of them can be more grateful, replied the colonel, than I am for those good intentions; and you cannot doubt of my being willing to render you the same service: yet if you were to continue to press this upon me, and I the same upon you, the unavoidable effect of our eagerness to make each other eternally happy, would be the making each other eternally miserable; for what can be worse in this world or the next, than everlasting disputes between man and wife? Let us therefore avoid all disputable points, continued he, and endeavor to promote our own happiness, and that of our neighbors, by every means in our power. The most probable reason I can conceive for the unequal distribution of the comforts of life, is to afford mankind opportunities for the exercises of benevolence, gratitude, and other virtues, which I am inclined to believe is the most likely way of acquiring the favor of the Deity. We certainly have it frequently in our power to add to the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures; to God Almighty we can neither do good nor harm; and therefore I cannot help thinking, that the conduct of our lives is of infinitely more importance than our religious opinions, or the forms of our worship. It has been already settled between us, continued he, that you shall educate our

daughters in your way of thinking, as our sons shall be educated in mine; our mutual endeavor will be, to render them virtuous women and honest men, which implies benevolence and liberality of sentiment; if we succeed, I have no doubt, notwithstanding our having taken different roads, but we shall all meet in heaven.

God Almighty, in his infinite mercy, grant it may be so, cried Madame de Seidlitz, in a transport of affection; for I am certain heaven will be no heaven to me without those I so dearly love. Then recollecting herself a little, she took occasion from what her husband had just said, to urge the last argument of her confessor:—Since you have no doubt, said she, of our meeting in heaven, although I retain my religion, and since those of our church declare there is no admission for those who persist in heresy, why will you not, my dearest husband, take the safer course, and embrace the catholic faith?

Here the colonel, smiling through the tears which his lady's endearments had previously forced into his eyes, replied, I confess, my beloved Theresa, that this last argument is so unworthy of your excellent understanding, that I am convinced you have had it suggested by some one of far inferior sense and candor to yourself. Consider, that in my conscience,—for whether I am right or wrong is out of the question;—but in my conscience I think the protestant religion preferable to that which you profess; yet you advise me, as the safest course I can take, to embrace yours; that is to say, to commit a piece of gross hypocrisy, and with a view to what? to impose on men? No; there might be sense in that; for men are imposed upon daily by hypocrites; but this piece of hypocrisy to which you advise me is with a view to impose upon God, and to get smuggled into heaven as a Roman catholic, while in my heart and conscience I remain a protestant.

Madame de Seidlitz seemed embarrassed: after a short silence, she said, I fear my anxiety makes me absurd; forgive me, my dear, continued she, for teasing you in this foolish manner.

I shall think myself for ever obliged by the affectionate and generous anxiety of my Theresa, said Seidlitz.

How could I allow myself to think for a moment that such integrity, such mainly generosity of mind, as you have always displayed, said she, taking her husband by the hand, and such strict adherence to the dictates of conscience, can be rejected? These also were the virtues of the man whose memory you so much revere, your noble friend and patron the marshal.

Ah! my Theresa, cried Seidlitz, can the long course of honor and integrity pursued by the gallant Keith be forgotten and rejected of Heaven, because he was born in a protestant country, or perhaps entertained erroneous speculative opinions? I well knew the uprightness of his mind, have seen many instances of his humanity and benevolence even to his enemies, and have myself received proofs of his generous friendship; it will be my latest boast to have been a witness to those noble exertions in which he finished a life of honor in the field of Hochkirch, where the gallant Prince Francis of Brunswick, a family so fertile in heroes, also fell. I thank Heaven I had the honor of assisting the marshal's intrepid endeavors in rallying and inspiring our disordered troops, in following him again and again to the charge; by which means the elated enemy was checked, our troops protected, the great monarch he served, and who honored him with his friendship, enabled to retreat in such order as to pitch his camp within a few miles of the field from which he retired. This great officer himself refusing, although dangerously wounded, to quit the field, continued his exertions, till he received a second wound, which proved instantly mortal. And shall a parcel of ignorant monks, a gang of useless drones, deal damnation around on all who have not a ready faith in their legends and their—? But I ask your pardon, my dear, said Seidlitz, checking himself; I did not mean to say any thing disobliging; but I heartily wish you would observe the dictates of your own understanding more, and listen to the suggestions of others less; the virtuous conduct which you have hitherto pursued is your best security for happiness here and hereafter; permit me to endeavor to secure mine in the manner most agreeable to my conscience, and of course the most likely to be successful.

Forgive me, my dearest friend, said Madame de Seidlitz, for this once, and I shall assure you, all the monks on earth shall never prevail on me to give you a single hint of this nature again. I am not a little ashamed of what I was foolishly induced to say:—Heaven be praised that you seem so much better than you were last night.

CHAPTER XL.

"Shall man be left abandon'd in the dust,
When Fate, relenting, lets the flow'r revive?
Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Bid him, tho' doom'd to perish, hope to live?
Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury, and pain?
No; Heaven's immortal spring shall yet revive,
And man's majestic beauty bloom again." Beattie.

THUS was the first and last dispute on religion that ever passed between Colonel Seidlitz and his lady, although both continued attached to that in which they had been bred: yet from this time, Madame de Seidlitz seemed to adopt, in many particulars, the liberal sentiments of her husband. They lived together in the happiest union for several years after the general peace.

Laura, their only child, was educated, according to the agreement between them, in her mother's religion.

It was already remarked, that the colonel never fully recovered his health after the contusion in his breast; on the

slightest cold, and sometimes without any known cause, he was liable to be seized with fits of oppressive and difficult breathing; a severe attack of this nature obliged him, by the king's express order, to quit the field in the middle of that short war between Prussia and the emperor respecting the succession of Bavaria. Having returned by slow journeys to Berlin, he soon after had the happiness to hear of his son's distinguishing himself by relieving the Baron Carlostein from the Austrian hussars. And at the conclusion of the peace, he retired to his small villa, with his wife and daughter, where he had the pleasure of entertaining the two friends, as has been mentioned. Carlostein he never saw more; but Captain Seidlitz spent all the time he could be spared from his regiment in his father's family, with whom he lived in the greatest harmony.

But Colonel Seidlitz's health gradually declined. This, however, was more apparent to others, than to those constantly with him; and Madame de Seidlitz was for a long time deceived by the cheerful air her husband always assumed in her presence; for his mind remained in full vigor, notwithstanding his bodily weakness. Having perceived, however, for some days, that he showed uncommon solicitude in arranging and settling his affairs, she took notice of that circumstance to him with an air of apprehension.

Is it not a sufficient reason, said he, my dear friend, that I know I must die some time or other, and that I do not know how soon?

But why disturb your mind with business at present? said she; you are certainly in no immediate danger.

You are not then of the opinion of the Duc de la Rochefoucault, replied the colonel, who says, *Il n'y a que la mort qui soit certaine, et cependant nous agissons comme si c'était la seule chose incertaine.*

That is applicable to me, as well as to you, my dear, said Madame de Seidlitz.

It is so, replied the colonel; and if I had become apprehensive of your death, as often as you prepared yourself for death, I should have been in continual apprehension ever since I knew you. The colonel said this with such an easy air, that Madame de Seidlitz became less alarmed.

But although the colonel had none of the oppressive asthmatic attacks as formerly, he felt his strength melting fast away: he permitted none of his family, however, to attend him through the night: an old soldier alone, who had been long in his service, lay in his bed-chamber.

A few days after this conversation with his lady, having had a very disturbed night, he perceived the near approach of death. He caused himself to be raised in his bed in the morning, a little before the hour at which his family usually entered the room; they were unconscious of his illness through the night; his lady, with Laura and Captain Seidlitz, sat around his bed:—when the colonel, smiling, said in a faint voice to his son, It is a long while, Seidlitz, since I assured my wife, that, notwithstanding the difference of our sentiments on certain subjects, this company should all meet in heaven.

I hope your prophecy will be accomplished, sir, said the young man; but not for a long time.

It is my hope, replied the colonel, that it will be long before the rest of the company follow, but I feel that I must set out soon.

Ah, father! cried Laura, with a voice of sorrow.—Captain Seidlitz looked with anguish at his mother-in-law.

Why do you talk so, my dear? said Madame de Seidlitz; you seem a little faint this morning; but you have often recovered from more oppressive symptoms.

Never, never! my beloved friend, said he; but you would not wish me to struggle any longer; the hope of perfect recovery has been long over, and the struggle is ending.

Alas! cried she, starting from her seat greatly alarmed, send for a physician.

If you love me, said he, let there be no intrusion.

She sunk on the bed, grasping his hand. Let my latest breath, continued he, declare my unaltered affection. I regret that I have been able to make so small a provision; but what can a soldier provide? I have served a heroic monarch with fidelity: he knows it. Your conduct, my Seidlitz, looking at his son, has thrown comfort and gladness on the heart of your father, and made my declining years the happiest of my life. I know you will behave with duty to your mother, and affection to your sister. Farewell, my beloved Theresa;—farewell my sweet Laura;—farewell, my Seidlitz:—I resign you to his protection, into whose merciful hands I resign my soul.—God Almighty bless you:—once more, farewell!—but I hope—I trust not for ever. My eyes grow dim!—a dark mist overhangs them!—I see you not, my Theresa!—My children!—my organs fail!—yet my soul departs entire.—Father of mercy, receive my soul!—His voice failed, and after a few sobs, this gallant soldier expired.

Madame de Seidlitz remained in speechless affliction, holding the cold hand of her husband for a considerable time after he had breathed his last. Laura, kneeling by her mother, wept without uttering a syllable, and Captain Seidlitz, unable to comfort either, stood motionless with grief, till a servant entering the chamber, Seidlitz supported Laura and her mother to their apartment, and then retired to his own.

CHAPTER XLI.

"La gravité est un mystère du corps, inventé pour cacher les défauts de l'esprit." Rochefoucault.

COLONEL Seidlitz left his family in very moderate circumstances. The king appointed a pension to his widow, and soon after promoted his son, who had only the rank of lieutenant, to the command of a troop of dragons. This young man behaved with great generosity to his mother-in-law, and continued for some time after his father's death to live with

her and his sister; but, on his being obliged to attend his regiment, Madame de Seidlitz took the resolution of returning to her native country, which she put in execution notwithstanding the strongest solicitations on the part of Captain Seidlitz, whose friendship and affection for them both made him exceedingly desirous of their remaining in Germany.

When we were led into this long digression, we left Madame de Seidlitz in conversation with Father Pedro, which was interrupted by the coming of Laura and Father Mulo. The latter always harbored fears that Madame Seidlitz's long residence in a country of heretics had diminished in her mind that salutary horror in which he thought they should be held by every sincere catholic. To counteract this, and to revive her faith in those points which he considered as most essential, he sent her, since her arrival at Naples, a large folio of divinity, earnestly entreating her to peruse it attentively along with her daughter, telling her at the same time that she might rely on having the second volume as soon as they had read the first.

Have you perused that admirable work, my dear daughter? said Father Mulo, seeing the book lie on the table.

I have begun it, replied Madame de Seidlitz; it is a book of too serious a nature to be read over superficially.

It is indeed a work of great weight, and requires the utmost attention, said Father Mulo.

It were fortunate, said Laura, if the authors of books which require so much attention, could write them so as to command it.

The business of an author is to write books, said Father Mulo, with becoming gravity; it is the duty of the reader to command his attention when he peruses them.

You are indeed too hard upon authors, my good young lady, said Father Pedro, to expect that they should not only write their books, but also be obliged to command the attention of their readers. My learned brother has, with more regard to distributive justice, divided the toil between the author and the reader.

In my humble opinion, replied Laura, smiling, he allots too large a proportion of the task to the courteous reader. It is not so easy a matter to command one's attention on perusing certain books as you seem to think. I own I never found mine more disobedient than in the perusal of that very admirable work which the reverend father recommends.

Your taste, I am afraid, said Father Mulo, addressing himself to Laura with much solemnity, is in some measure corrupted by books of profane history, or of amusement, whose merit consists in their eloquence, or perhaps in their wit.

And you may judge, my dear daughter, added Father Pedro, how little value ought to be put on that kind of merit, by its being often to be met with in the writings of infidels and heretics.

I should be better pleased, resumed Laura, to meet it elsewhere; but I hope, father, you do not think that where there is wit there must also be infidelity.

Why really, daughter, said Father Mulo, answering with more gravity of manner than depth of reflection, where there is much of the first, there is often reason to suspect some of the last.

I cannot be of that opinion, said Madame de Seidlitz; for I have generally found true wit in better company; and although we sometimes find infidelity accompanied by wit, how much oftener are we shocked with pert ostentatious infidelity without any wit at all?

I am convinced my mother is in the right, cried Laura; and I hope you will allow, father, that there is not a necessary connexion between them.

Father Mulo perceiving at length that he had spoken a little inconsiderately, was obliged to own, though with evident reluctance, that he hoped there was not.

I am certain there is not, added Laura; and I am obliged to my mother for having made me remark instances, both in conversation and in reading, where not only the strength of the arguments, but also the purest wit, was on the side of virtue and piety.

I can assure you, young lady, from my own experience, said Father Mulo, with an air of great sagacity, and wishing to retract his first assertion, that it is almost always the case;—true wit and eloquence are generally on the side of orthodoxy.

How comes it then that this author, said Laura, pointing to the large volume, has not seasoned his work with a little wit or eloquence, since there is nothing sinful in them; and they would have made it more universally read, and of course more useful?

How comes it? repeated Father Mulo, who was not famous for quick replies on emergencies of this kind,—how comes it, did you say?

Why it comes by the diabolical malice of Satan, cried Father Pedro, stepping into the relief of his brother; it is all owing to the spite of our great spiritual enemy, who is ever ready to enliven the works of the wicked; and has, it should seem, perplexed the sense and darkened the reasoning of this excellent author, so as to render it a little laborious for the young lady to read his work with the attention it requires.

The greater the effort, the more meritorious will it be in the young lady to perform that duty as she ought, resumed Father Mulo.

True, brother, said Pedro; and thus the malice of Satan is defeated, and, like the words of Balaam the son of Beor, what was intended as a curse is converted into a blessing.

Father Pedro had a sovereign contempt for his venerable brother; and as he wished him to retain his influence with Madame de Seidlitz without participation, he was too ready to display him in a ridiculous light before her, as in the present instance.

But perceiving that he should have no further opportunity that day of prosecuting the object of his visit, he withdrew,

leaving Father Mulo to dine with his two relations, which he did accordingly, and in such a manner as gave them no suspicion of his having already made a very ample repast at the house of a pious old lady, whose time of dining was two hours earlier than that of Madame de Seidlitz: for it must be allowed, in justice to Father Mulo, that although he reasoned but feebly, and thought with difficulty, he digested with uncommon force and freedom.

CHAPTER XLII.

—“With tract oblique
At first, as one who sought access, but fear'd
To interrupt, side-long he works his way.
As when a ship by skilful steersman wrought
Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind
Veers off, as off so steers, and shifts her sails;
So varied he.—”

Milton.

FATHER Pedro having found Madame de Seidlitz less tractable than he expected, resolved, on the next occasion, to sound Laura herself, and try to dispose her to the purpose he had in view. Accordingly, a few days after, on being left alone with her, he turned the conversation on the subject of charity; mentioned some individuals who distinguished themselves by the exercise of this virtue, and dwelt particularly on Zeluco, whom he represented as one of the most charitable persons he had ever known; adding, that those were happy who were blessed with benevolent and charitable inclinations, but much more were they to be envied, who were also blessed with the means of putting such inclinations into action.

Laura agreeing with him in this sentiment, he said, Would not you be happy, my daughter, to be in this enviable situation?

I flatter myself, replied she, that if ever I had a great desire to be rich, it proceeded from a disposition to relieve the distressed. But it has been remarked, father, added she, that those who have nothing to give, are wonderfully generous; and I myself have known some, who, when they had not the power, expressed the strongest inclination of being liberal; yet when they afterwards came to have the power, seemed entirely to lose the inclination. Those observations give me diffidence in myself; I am not certain what alterations riches might make in my own disposition.

I have no diffidence of you, said the father.
Of this, at least, I am certain, said Laura, that if I could know beforehand, that wealth would have the same effect on me, that it seems to have had on some of my acquaintance, I should refuse it were it offered to me.

Depend upon it, my dear daughter, said Father Pedro, those you allude to never had charitable and benevolent dispositions; they have only affected to have them, when they well knew that nothing was expected, nor would be received from them. Their real dispositions appeared afterwards when they became rich. But in you, my dear child, exists the reality, not the semblance, of benevolence; and riches could only enable you to extend your generosity, not render it more sincere.

Laura thanked him for his good opinion.
I should have still a better opinion of you, said Father Pedro, if I had not been informed that you refused this very enviable power.

I have no idea of what you mean, said Laura.
Tell me, in the first place, my dear daughter, whether you really refused your hand to Signor Zeluco?

I did, said she without hesitation.

And what good reason could you have, my dear child, for rejecting so generous a man?

You will allow, father, that a woman may have good reasons for refusing a man for her husband, although she does not think proper to reveal them to her father confessor.

You ought to have very good reasons indeed, daughter, for declining such a fortunate and happy match.

But my particular sentiments and feelings might render it a very unhappy match.

How could it be unhappy for you, said the father, who would reap every advantage by the alliance?

If my husband could reap none, said she, that circumstance alone would make it an uncomfortable alliance to me.

Do not mistake me, my dear child; your husband would certainly acquire a beautiful, accomplished, and I hope a pious wife; but the gifts of fortune are all on his side. There are many beautiful and accomplished young ladies in Italy who would be happy to be united to Signor Zeluco: But what probability is there of your having the offer of a husband of superior fortune to his?

Not the least, said Laura; but, my good father, I thought the question between us related to happiness, not merely to fortune.

It does so, answered Father Pedro, and what do you think of the happiness of having it in your power, as well as in your inclination, to do good to others; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, protect the orphan, and make the widow's heart sing for joy?

According to your own account, father, said Laura, all this is done by Signor Zeluco's fortune already; to embarrass such a generous and charitable man with the additional expenses which a wife occasions, she added with a smile, would be diverting into different channels that bounty which at present flows entirely upon the naked, the orphan, and widow.

There is no occasion for turning it into another channel, said the father, a little peevishly; but I perceive you are in a jesting mood.

You shall not be angry, father, said Laura; if you are offended, I must be to blame.

Nay, replied he, I am not offended, child; your vivacity

cannot offend me; I wish, however, it may not lead you into error.

If it ever should, father, said Laura, I beg you will not, by way of expiation, enjoin me to give my hand to Zeluco, for that is a penance I shall never submit to.

Laura pronounced these last words with such strength of emphasis, as, joined to what her mother had said, greatly damped the sanguine hopes of Pedro, with regard to the success of his mission.

CHAPTER XLIII.

“S'il y a un amour pur et exempt mêlange de nos autres passions, c'est celui qui est caché au fond du cœur, et que nous ignorons nous-mêmes.”
Rochefoucault.

In the meantime Signora Sporza became so very fond of her two relations, that she preferred their company to those numerous assemblies in which she had been accustomed to pass her evenings. Having perceived that Laura had no great relish for them, she formed a small select party at her own house, which met two or three times a-week, and to which the honorable Mr. N—, and a few others, were constantly invited.

This gentleman had long been on a footing of friendly intimacy with Signora Sporza, and now found an additional power of attraction to her parties in the lively and judicious conversation of Laura. Few men's company was more universally acceptable than Mr. N—'s; but what rendered him peculiarly agreeable to Madame de Seidlitz and her daughter, was his acquaintance with the Baron Carlstein, and Captain Seidlitz. He became known to the first, during his residence at Potsdam; and the baron, on his expressing an inclination to see the camp at Magdeburg, gave him a letter of introduction to his friend Captain Seidlitz, who was there with his regiment; and Mr. N— always spoke of those two gentlemen in high terms of commendation.

Laura was seldom or never in company with Mr. N—, without making fresh inquiry concerning her brother. It was not in Mr. N—'s power to talk much of him, without his friend Carlstein's being included in the circumstances of the narrative; and every anecdote relating to those gentlemen seemed highly interesting to Madame de Seidlitz, and still more so to Laura.

Pray, sir, said she to Mr. N—, one evening when the rest of the company were engaged at cards, is my brother as fond of horses as ever.

He is remarkably fond of his horses, replied Mr. N—; and no officer in the army is esteemed a better rider.

He is very graceful on horseback, said Laura.

He is very much so, replied Mr. N—.

I do not think the scar on his face at all disfigures him, said Laura.

He had no scar on his face, madam, when I saw him, replied Mr. N—.

No scar? said Laura, with surprise.

No, madam;—not Captain Seidlitz: his friend, the baron, indeed, has a very honorable scar covered with a piece of black plaster, which does not disfigure him in the least.

I thought you had mentioned him, said Laura, blushing very deeply.

A considerable degree of intimacy was gradually formed between Mr. N— and this young lady. It was hardly possible for them not to have a mutual esteem for each other. Laura had received the most favorable impression of Mr. N— from Signora Sporza, who had spoke of him as a man of sense, integrity, and benevolence; and her own observation of his conversation and behavior confirmed her in the justice of her friend's representation. He, on the other hand, while he agreed with the general opinion of the graces of Laura's face and person, was still more struck with her other accomplishments, with the genuine modesty and unaffected dignity of manner which accompanied her beauty: she was equally free from coquetry and disguise; her sentiments of those around her might be easily guessed by her behavior.

To those of whom she had but an indifferent opinion, she observed such a degree of cautious and polite reserve, as rendered it very difficult for them to be on a footing of any degree of freedom or ease with her, however strongly they were desirous of being so. But to those of whom she thought well, and particularly to Mr. N—, she behaved with a natural frankness, expressive of confidence and good-will.

Yet although this engaging frankness of manner was extended to her male friends as well as her female, it was always attended with such expressive purity and dignity as precluded licentious hopes or wishes; for innate modesty pervaded the easy openness of her manners, appeared in all her words, actions, and gestures, and presided even in her dress. As often as the mode seemed to lean to the opposite side, Laura had the art of making hers retain the fashionable air, while she corrected the circumstances which she disapproved.

Mr. N— had the same degree of esteem and approbation of Laura, which she made no difficulty of declaring for him; and there was no engagement which he would have preferred to passing an evening at Signora Sporza's when he knew that Laura was to be of the party.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Characteristic Sketches.

Mr. N— had for his servant out of livery, one Buchanan, a Scotchman, to whom his master's growing attachment to Laura, gave the greatest concern; and his concern augmented in proportion to the beauties and accomplishments which he himself could not help observing in that young lady, and the good qualities he heard ascribed to her; for he had

too good an opinion of his master's taste and penetration to think him capable of a lasting attachment to one who was not remarkably accomplished. But Laura had one failing which, in this man's opinion, neither beauty nor fortune, nor understanding, nor an assemblage of every good quality of mind or person could compensate—she was a Roman catholic.

That his master should be captivated, and possibly drawn into a marriage with a woman of that religion, Buchanan considered as one of the greatest misfortunes that could happen to him, and he knew it would be viewed in the same light by Lady Elizabeth, Mr. N—'s aunt, by whom he had been placed with her nephew. The strong attachment this man had for his master, and his extraordinary zeal for his welfare, prompted him to intermeddle in matters which did not properly belong to him, and to offer his advice much oftener than it was wished or expected.

One day when Mr. N— dined at home, and expected nobody but Mr. Steele, who lived with him, the latter invited Mr. Squander, and he brought along with him a certain Mr. Bronze, one of those gossiping companions, who know every body, are of every body's opinion, and are always ready to laugh at every body's joke; who nestle themselves into the intimacy of men of fortune and rank, allow themselves to be laughed at, are invited on that account, or to fill a vacant chair at the table; and sometimes merely to afford the landlord the comfort of having at least one person in the company of inferior understanding to himself, whose chief employment is to fetch and carry tittle-tattle; become at length as it were one of the family, and are alternately caressed and abused like any other spaniel in it. This person had, many years ago, come to Italy with a party of young English, who, as they posted through the country, dropped him sick at Ferrara; and having resided ever since in Italy, he was thought to have some taste in pictures, antique intaglios, cameos, statues, &c. and had picked up a considerable fortune by selling them to his countrymen who came to Rome or Naples.

Mr. Squander would not, for his own private satisfaction, have given a horse-shoe for all the antiques in Rome, and had no more taste in painting than his pointer; yet, thinking that he must carry home a small assortment of each, were it only to prove that he had been in Italy, Mr. Bronze had been recommended to him as a great connoisseur, who would either furnish him with what he wanted, or assist him in purchasing it.

Buchanan waited at the side-board. They talked of an assembly, at which Messrs. N—, Squander, and Steele, had been the preceding evening. The first spoke with warmth of the beauty of Laura. The antiquarian, who had also seen her, said, her face had a great resemblance to a certain admired madonna of Guido's. Mr. Squander observed, that he thought she was very like a picture which he had seen at Bologna, but whether it was painted by Guido or by Rheni, he could not recollect. Mr. N— said, smiling, that it was probably done by both, as they often painted conjunctly; but, however that may be, continued he, the young lady I mentioned, has one of the finest countenances that I ever saw either in nature or on canvass. Buchanan, who was sorry to hear his master praise her with such a warmth, shook his head.

You have seen many handsomer in Scotland? said Squander, addressing himself to Buchanan.

I will not presume to make any comparisons, Mr. Squander, replied Buchanan; for, on the present occasion, I doubt, they would be thought odious.

Mr. N— had often desired Squander to leave off the indecent custom which he had, of addressing the servants, but without effect. So taking no notice of what passed between him and Buchanan, he proceeded to praise Laura's accomplishments, particularly her voice, and her execution on the piano-forte.

Your countrywomen, said Squander, renewing his attack on Buchanan, prefer the Scotch fiddle. The antiquarian laughed very heartily, and all the footmen tittered at this jest, which Squander himself called a bon mot. A bon mot repeated Steele. Yes, by G—d, said Squander, and as good a one as ever George Bon Mot uttered in his life. What think you, Buchanan?

It certainly bears this mark of a good joke, Mr. Squander, said Buchanan, that it has been often repeated; yet there are people who would rather be the object than the rehearser of it.

You are a wit, Mr. Buchanan, said Bronze, tipping the wink to Squander, and you will certainly make your fortune by it.

If I should fail that way, Mr. Bronze, I may try what is to be done by the haberdashing of intaglios and cameos, and other hardware, said Buchanan.

A great many more of your countrymen, indeed, have made their fortune as pedlars than as wits, resumed Squander.

The antiquarian burst into a loud fit of laughter at this sally, clapping his hands, and crying, Excellent, bravo!

Buchanan, observing that Mr. N— was displeased at what was going on, made no reply, till Squander pushed him, by saying, What have you to say to that, Buchanan?

All I have to say, Mr. Squander, is, that I have known some of my countrymen, as well as yours, who were beholden to their fortune for all the applause their wit received.

Although Mr. N— could with difficulty refrain from smiling at this remark, assuming a serious air, he told Buchanan, there was no need of his further attendance, and when he withdrew, Mr. N— started another subject, which prevented the antiquarian and Mr. Squander from abusing Buchanan, for which he saw them prepared.

Mr. N—, however, spoke not in his usual affable manner to Buchanan the whole evening, and when he went out, addressing one of the footmen instead of Buchanan, as was his custom, he said, he was going to Madame de Seidlitz.

Buchanan, imagining that his master was highly displeased

CHAPTER XLV.

"L'hyperisie est un hommage que le vice rend à la vertu."
Rochefoucault.

ZELUCO plainly perceived at their next meeting the ill-success of the father's negotiation, in spite of the palliations with which it was communicated. As his hopes had been greatly raised, his disappointment was great in proportion: his enraged spirit, unaccustomed to restraint, on this occasion was deaf to the dictates of caution, and rejected the mask of hypocrisy; he raved like a madman, poured curses on both mother and daughter, particularly the latter, on whom he vowed vengeance for what he termed her insolence, and for all the trouble and vexation she had given him.

Father Pedro crossed himself, and began to repeat his Pater Noster.

Come, come, father, said Zeluco, do not let you and I keep up the farce with each other any longer. I know you have too much sense to lay any stress on these mummeries; and I am not such a fool as to think that a woman is to be won by crossings or prayers.

You have as good a chance that way, however, replied the father, as by swearing and raging like a fury.

I will have her one way or another! exclaimed Zeluco.

And what way do you intend to take next? said Pedro.

I'll have her by force. I'll have her seized and carried aboard a vessel. I'll fly with her to Algiers! to the West Indies!—anywhere! exclaimed he with a loud voice, and stamping with his foot; for she shall be mine!—by all the gods, she shall!

Of all the gods, said Father Pedro calmly, the god of hell was the only one who was driven to the miserable shift of committing a rape to get himself a wife: do you intend to imitate him, signor?

I do not care who I imitate, roared Zeluco, were it the devil.

In the present case, however, you will not even have the satisfaction of imitating him throughout; for although you may hurry yourself to hell, you have little chance of carrying the lady along with you. I would advise you, therefore, to adopt some less desperate expedient.

What expedient? cried Zeluco: I can think of none; I can hardly think at all. But if thou canst assist me in obtaining this woman, thou wilt eternally oblige me, priest; and thou shalt have money enough to build a church.

Although Zeluco in his rage thus threw himself open, and put himself in some degree in the father's power, the latter was resolved not to follow his example, and put himself in Zeluco's. He plainly perceived, indeed, that Zeluco did not imagine that he had acted from motives of piety; but whatever suspicions he might entertain, Pedro considered that there was some difference between being suspected of a villany, and openly avowing it; he therefore assured Zeluco, that he would have no further connexion with him in this business, and that he would inform against him, if he made any criminal attempt on Laura. He acknowledged, he said, that as he had thought his marriage with that young lady would be happy for both, and agreeable to the worthy lady her mother, besides conducting to other good purposes, he should have been extremely happy to have promoted it; but after the furious and unwarrantable projects he had just heard of, he desired to have no more to do with it, directly or indirectly.

This calm remonstrance brought Zeluco to his senses; he now perceived that the person he had to deal with, and whose assistance he still thought might be of use, was of too wary a character to act without a cover, to which he might retreat on occasion.

After a little recollection, he replied in conciliating terms. Surely, father, you cannot imagine that what has escaped me in a moment of passion is my serious intention; my own reflections would very soon have convinced me of the folly and wickedness of an attempt which your prudence has in an instant put in a just light. I think myself most happy in such a friend, on whose wisdom I may rely, and whose counsels I shall be ever ready to follow. My love and respect for the virtuous young lady is such, that I will use every lawful means in my power to obtain her hand. I know the well-placed confidence which she has in you, and I most earnestly beg that you will use your influence with her in my favor. In the meantime, my dear father, I am sensible of the trouble which I give you; and as the only way in which you permit me to show my gratitude is by enabling you to extend your benevolence to the deserving and the necessitous, I beg you will accept of this, which you will apply to whatever pious purpose you think proper:—so saying, he put a purse of sequins into the father's hands, assuring him of double the sum, independent of what he had already promised, on the successful conclusion of the business.

Now, my son, replied the monk, you talk rationally; and reason always suggests a mode of action opposite to what is prompted by rage. You have already gained the good opinion of the young lady's mother; please to recollect how you gained it; not by violence, but by gentleness, by rendering her an essential service: and although the young woman herself seems indisposed towards you, yet who knows what a sense of gratitude might do? It might have the same effect on the daughter that it has had on the mother. The last obligation you laid on the family was of a pecuniary nature, which is more apt to make an impression on an old heart than on a young: but there are obligations which make deeper impressions on young hearts than on old.

What obligations are those?—I am ready to do whatever you direct.

Opportunities of this kind may occur, said the father, and then your own good sense will direct you how to profit by them. In your rage you proposed methods the most likely

to make her detest you, and love those who should have the good fortune to free her from you; you spoke not like yourself, but like a robber, like a rascal. A man who attempted what you threatened, would draw upon himself her just hatred; whereas, he who did the reverse, who had the good fortune to save her from such an attempt, might probably gain her love.

Having said this in a very significant manner, Father Pedro took his leave, in spite of Zeluco's endeavors to prevail on him to be more explicit. After remaining for some time in profound meditation,—He who has the good fortune, said he, repeating to himself the words which Pedro had pronounced with emphasis, he who has the good fortune to save her from such an attempt, might probably gain her heart. Who can make such an attempt? How can I deliver her from dangers to which she is not exposed?

He conjectured, however, that the father meant to convey a hint to him respecting some emergency, which he knew would occur, although he was resolved not to be further explicit; and determined to observe his words and actions attentively, in the hopes of discovering his meaning more clearly.

Two days after, he was able more fully to comprehend the father's idea: when he informed Zeluco that he had just left Madame de Seidlitz and her daughter; that Laura having often expressed a curiosity to visit Mount Vesuvius, her mother, who had formerly opposed it, had now agreed to it, on his offering to accompany her and Signora Sporza; that accordingly he and these two ladies were to dine next day at Portici, visit the mountain in the evening, and return to Naples the same night. If you are eager to be of the party, added he, I will endeavor to obtain the ladies' consent.

Zeluco, engrossed by reflection, did not give an immediate answer.

But I know, continued the father, you have been there already; and possibly do not choose to return again.

Pray, my good father, said Zeluco, rousing from his reverie, at what hour do you propose returning to town?

It is impossible to say exactly, replied Father Pedro: I dare say it will be late enough, for I find Signora Laura wishes to see the explosions to the greatest advantage; but I perceive we cannot have you. I shall not, however, inform the ladies that I made you the proposal, or that you so much as know of the expedition, lest they should accuse you of want of gallantry. Adieu.—I can stay no longer at present.

What servants do you take with you? resumed Zeluco.

I really do not know, said the father; but I must be excused, I cannot stay any longer now;—one of my penitents waits for me.—Servants! let me see—there will be no need of many servants. I presume we shall have only Giacomo. The muleteers will be with us till we regain the carriage; and then we shall have only the coachman and Giacomo to attend us to town. Saying this, the cautious monk hurried away, leaving Zeluco satisfied respecting the meaning of his former hints.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"—Revenge, at first thought sweet,
 Bitter ere long, back on itself recoils." *Milton.*

ZELUCO now determined to plan an attack on the ladies as they returned from the mountain, to drive off the assassins, and assume the merit with Laura of having saved her from robbery and assassination.

Having communicated his design to his valet-de-chambre, the confidant and accomplice of many of his villanies; the scheme seemed practicable and safe in all respects, except in the necessity which appeared of employing many agents. The valet, however, undertook the business with the assistance of only one person, and spoke with a confidence of success seldom acquired otherwise than by experience in similar scenes.

Being now convinced of Signora Sporza's dislike to him, and having a violent suspicion that it was through her means that Laura was so ill-disposed towards him, Zeluco expressed some anxiety with regard to Signora Sporza, lest she might suspect the source of the attempt.—The valet assured him, that she should be particularly attended to, for he would order his companion to fire a pistol so close to her ear, that, though charged only with powder, it would confound her sufficiently to prevent her from making observations, and terrify the rest of the company into non-resistance.

This suggested a horrid piece of wickedness to the vengeful mind of Zeluco, which, however, he did not communicate to the valet; but next day, when he understood that every thing was arranged, he desired to see the pistol with which the man was to arm his companion.—You are certain it is charged with powder only? said he.—I am very certain, replied the valet; for I charged it myself. Let the fellow fire then directly at her head; this will frighten her into silence, said Zeluco, and render every thing easy.—He then gave him very particular directions in what manner they were to behave to Laura; and, sending the valet to fetch something from a distant part of the house, he slipped two bullets into the pistol: the hatred and thirst of revenge, which burned in his breast, against Signora Sporza, overcoming his caution, and prompting him to a measure which might have produced a discovery of the whole plan.

Before these two emissaries set out, Zeluco again repeated to the valet not to allow his companion to touch Laura, but to pull Signora Sporza entirely out of the carriage, and then fire the pistol in her face; which would be the signal for Zeluco himself to make his appearance.

In the evening, Zeluco waited on Madame de Seidlitz, where he found father Mulo; he affected great surprise when she told him that her daughter, Signora Sporza, and Father

with him, imputed it to his having shaken his head at the praises of Laura; and was now more convinced than ever, that Mr. N— was desperately in love with her, and in immediate danger of proposing marriage to her.

Under this apprehension, he resolved to use every means, even at the risk of greatly offending his master, to prevent a measure which he thought diametrically opposite to his interest and happiness. Knowing that a certain baronet, who was uncle to Mr. N— by the mother, and whose presumptive heir Mr. N— was, had lately arrived at Rome, and was soon expected at Naples; Buchanan imagined the most likely means he could use to accomplish his purpose, was to inform the baronet: he therefore determined to write to him all his fears relative to his master. Buchanan had been educated at a university, and had learning sufficient to render him a pedant; to have an opportunity of displaying his learning therefore, in all probability, was an additional motive for his writing the following letter to the baronet:

"HONORED SIR:

Hearing of your arrival at Rome, I think it my indispensable duty to inform you, that my master, and your nephew, the honorable Mr. N—, has been seized with a violent passion for a young lady denominated Laura Seidlitz, who lately arrived at this city from Germany. The young woman is of a comely countenance—*Vultus nimium lubricus apici*, and as far as I have hitherto been able to learn, of a very tolerable reputation. Yet, notwithstanding the fairness of her character and countenance, she is at bottom a black papist.—*Hinc illa lachryma!* This is the cause of my affliction; for were she as beautiful as Helen of Greece, Cleopatra of Egypt, or even as Mary Queen of Scots, she, being, like the aforesaid Mary, of the popish persuasion, would be a most unsuitable spouse for my master. Yet there is hardly a day goes over his head that he is not in this young woman's company, and the Lord above only knows how far a headstrong youth, instigated by passion, may push matters, more especially as he generally meets her at one Signora Sporza's, a very pawky gentlewoman, who understands what's what as well as any woman in Naples, and being the relation of the aforesaid Laura, will leave no stone unturned to get her linked to Mr. N—.

I once had hopes, that as the young woman attends mass regularly every day—for those poor deluded creatures show more zeal for their own superstition than some protestants do for true religion—I had once hopes, I say, that she might object to marrying a protestant. But I am informed, that, as the song is, *Her mother did so before her*, which has greatly diminished my hopes of refusal on her part; for it is natural to conclude that the mother has given the daughter a tincture of her own disposition, and you know, sir, that

"Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem,
 Testa diu."

"I am sure I need add no more to convince you of the misery that such a match as this would occasion to all Mr. N—'s relations, particularly to his honored aunt, who holds Antichrist and all his adherents in the greatest detestation. You must likewise be sensible, that a popish wife, however fair her aspect, must give but a dark prospect to a protestant husband, inasmuch as her religion instructs her that she is not obliged to keep faith with heretics.—*Hec, quod fides mutatur Deum flectit!*

"These reflections are so manifest, that you will wonder they do not occur to Mr. N—; but you must remember, that he is blinded by the mist of passion, and in that state people cannot perceive the force of reason.—*Quid enim ratione nitimur ad cupimus.*—Yet if you could find a plausible pretext for desiring Mr. N— to meet you at Rome, instead of allowing him to wait for you here at Naples, I am convinced he would obey your summons; and when he is removed from the opportunities of seeing this young woman, he may possibly be beyond the influence of her attraction, and above the wiles of her coadjutors; and you may then prevail upon him to listen to the voice of reason, abandon this land of superstition and delusion, where we have sojourned too long, and return directly to Britain; whereas it would be as easy to whistle the *lavacra out of the list*,† as to make him agree to this proposition while he remains within eye-shot of this same Laura Seidlitz.

"I am, with all due respect,

"Honored Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"GEORGE BUCHANAN."

The gentleman to whom this letter was addressed, had already received a hint from a friend of his at Naples to the same purpose; he therefore determined to follow Buchanan's advice, and actually wrote to his nephew, that it was not in his power to proceed to Naples, as he had intended, and expressing a strong desire of seeing him and Mr. Steele at Rome.

However fond Mr. N— was of Laura's company, he could not think of allowing his uncle, for whom, independent of other considerations, he had a very great respect, to return to England without waiting on him; he therefore took his leave of Signora Sporza and her two friends a few days after receiving this letter, and he and Mr. Steele set out for Rome, accompanied by Buchanan and two footmen.

Signora Sporza told him at parting, that she was herself engaged to a lady of her acquaintance, who had business of importance at Rome, to make that jaunt with her, so that she expected very soon to have the pleasure of meeting him in that city.

Squander, and two or three other young Englishmen, finding their time pass a little heavily without Mr. N— and Steele, followed them on the third day after they set out.

* Sly. † The larks from the sky.

Pedro had set out that same morning on an expedition to Mount Vesuvius, and that they were not as yet returned.

When the night advanced without their appearing, Madame de Seidlitz became uneasy; the noise of every carriage gave her hopes that it was theirs; and every disappointment when the carriage passed increased her uneasiness.

When Madame de Seidlitz first began to express her apprehension, Zeluco withdrew on pretence of an engagement; and Father Mulo remained, as he said himself, to comfort Madame de Seidlitz, in case any misfortune should really have happened to Laura and the rest of the party.

Madame de Seidlitz had heard, in general, of people being sometimes hurt by the fall of the substances exploded from the mountain: her alarmed imagination prompted her to make particular inquiries on this subject; and Father Mulo's retentive memory supplied her with every instance of that kind which had happened for many years back; but he added, at the close of every example, that such a misfortune having happened to the people he mentioned, could not be considered as a positive proof that the same had befallen any of the company for whom she was so much interested; and if the like had happened to some of them, still it was possible that Laura was not the unfortunate person: for which reason, added he, my dear madam, you ought to keep yourself in perfect tranquillity, and hope for the best; because vexing yourself will be of no manner of use, but is rather a tempting of Providence, and may draw down upon your head the very misfortune you dread, or some other as bad. By such reasoning Father Mulo endeavored, with uninterrupted perseverance, to quiet her fears.

What effect this method of conveying comfort might have produced on the mind of Madame de Seidlitz, can never be known, for her imagination was too much alarmed to permit her to attend to his discourse: besides, although it may seem a bold word, no ecclesiastic ever possessed the faculty of speaking without being listened to, in greater perfection than the reverend Father Mulo.

On leaving Madame de Seidlitz, Zeluco mounted his horse, and rode directly towards the place, which he had fixed on for the attack. Having perceived his emissaries in waiting, he turned his horse without seeming to take notice of them, and rode slowly backwards and forwards, till he saw the carriage coming briskly along. The valet and his companion, with masks on their faces, riding furiously up to the carriage, ordered the driver to stop, on pain of having his brains blown out; the driver instantly obeyed, and Giacomo fell from his horse on his knees, supplicating for mercy in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to whom, after he had recovered his recollection a little, he added St. Januarius. Father Pedro also prayed with much seeming fervency, invoking the aid of St. Dominic, and a whole host of other saints.

After the valet had taken the ladies' purses, which were instantly presented to him, the other fellow dragged Signora Sporza out of the chaise: she exclaimed that every thing had been delivered to them, and attempted to get into the carriage again; but the fellow, standing between her and it, presented his pistol, which flashed without going off. Zeluco seeing the flash, and hearing the screams of Laura, galloped towards the carriage, hollaring, and threatening the assailants with immediate death if they did not desist: but the fellow, whose pistol had snapped, fearing that he should not be thought to have performed his part properly, if he did not actually fire it, cocked it once more, and fired it off in such a hurried manner, that both the bullets passed the head of Signora Sporza, and one of them lodged in Zeluco's shoulder.

This staggered him a little; but the attackers flying, he came up to the carriage in time to prevent Laura from rolling out of it: she had retained her presence of mind while she considered the assailants simply as robbers; and after delivering their money, seeing Signora Sporza pulled violently out of the carriage, she called to Father Pedro to assist her; but on hearing the pistol fired, which she imagined had killed her friend, she fainted in the chaise. Signora Sporza also was greatly alarmed; but seeing the aggressors fly, she rose from her knees, on which she had sunk when the pistol was fired, and assisted Zeluco and Father Pedro in their endeavors to recover Laura; who, as soon as she recognized Signora Sporza and the father, and understood that the danger was over, exclaimed, What blessed angel has delivered us from the ruffians? Father Pedro immediately answered, We all owe our deliverance to Signor Zeluco.—Signor Zeluco! cried Laura with painful surprise. Yes, my daughter, added he, and here he is to receive our grateful acknowledgments. We are all highly indebted to you, signor, said she.—How providential was your coming! added Father Pedro.—Considering the hour of the night, said Signora Sporza, his coming seems miraculously so.

Zeluco then informed them how he was induced to meet them; that as he drew near the carriage, hearing the shrieks of Signora Laura, he rode up to the ruffians, one of whom he said he could have taken, had he not been more anxious to relieve them than to seize him.

The driver and Giacomo having now recovered from their terror, the carriage was prepared, and the company moved towards the town. Giacomo told the driver as they went, that he had made an observation which he would communicate to him as a friend, because it might be of use on future occasions of the same nature; it was this: that while he continued to implore the first three persons to whom he had addressed his prayers, no interposition had been made in his favor; but that as soon as he began to implore the protection of St. Januarius, Signor Zeluco had appeared for the rescue of the company. Certo, said the coachman, St. Januarius takes the greatest care of all his votaries on Mount Vesuvius and the neighboring district, *ad ogni uccello suo nido* e

bello; but out of sight of the mountain, he assured Giacomo that St. Januarius was as regardless of prayers as his neighbors, and not more to be depended upon than those he complained of.

When the company arrived at the house of Madame de Seidlitz, Father Mulo was giving her a circumstantial account of a robbery with assassination, which happened many years before on the road between Portici and Naples; and as he, with wonderful accuracy remarked, looking at his watch, much about the hour in which he was then speaking; he also detailed the providential manner in which the murderer was discovered, and how he was broken on the wheel, to the edification, as Father Mulo expressed himself, of all the beholders, and the great comfort of the murdered person's widow.

The powerful faculty hinted above, which the father possessed, and which shone with peculiar lustre in narrative, prevented these anecdotes from affecting Madame de Seidlitz so much as they would otherwise have done. The sight of the company which now entered her house relieved her, however, from a set of very disagreeable reflections.

Father Pedro, in the presence of the ladies, gave her the history of their adventure, in which the generous intrepidity of Signor Zeluco made a conspicuous figure; and the watchful care of Providence in sending him to their deliverance was mentioned in the most pious terms.

Madame de Seidlitz then poured out the grateful effusions of her heart in thanks to Zeluco, who modestly acknowledged that on seeing her alarmed at the ladies not returning, and being himself exceedingly uneasy, he had, on leaving her, immediately mounted his horse, and galloped towards Portici, which he should ever consider as the most fortunate incident of his life, with whatever consequence the accident which had happened to himself should be attended.

Accident! cried Madame de Seidlitz: What accident?—and then perceiving blood on his clothes,—Alas! signor, said she, you are wounded! send directly for a surgeon!

Father Pedro, who, notwithstanding the blood, had reasons of his own for thinking that he was not at all, or in no dangerous degree hurt, said it would be best that Zeluco were removed to his own house, where the wound would be examined more conveniently, and proposed to accompany him immediately.

Madame de Seidlitz, wringing her hands in the utmost grief, begged that all possible care might be taken of him; for she should never again know comfort if any accident should accrue to so worthy a man, particularly, added she, looking to Laura, on such an occasion.

Her daughter, with more composure, but with visible emotion, begged of Father Pedro not to leave Zeluco till his wound was dressed, which she hoped would not be found dangerous.

Father Mulo desired Zeluco to be of good cheer, for heaven seldom permitted villany of this kind to pass unpunished; but that in case this wound should prove mortal, he might rely upon it, that the planners of such a daring attack would be brought to open shame; for, sooner or later, murders were always discovered.

Signora Sporza observed to Zeluco, who by this time was not the least alarmed in the company, that the wound could not be dangerous, as he had been able to sit on horseback, while they were coming to town.

Zeluco was then put into a carriage, and slowly transported to his own house, accompanied by Father Pedro, who did not choose to make any particular inquiry, nor to express the surprise he really felt at there being a wound at all; for, as the carriage went slowly, he was afraid of being overheard by the servant that walked by its side. The wounded man himself was silent, except that once he muttered, Damn the awkward blockhead! and afterwards, What a cursed blunder!

As soon as he was placed in his own bed-chamber, Is the surgeon come? said he to Father Pedro.

Do you really wish for a surgeon? said the father. Certainly; don't you see how I bleed?

I see blood; but I had hopes it was not from your veins. It is a cursed business: pray send for a surgeon, cried Zeluco, impatiently. This was done accordingly.

The valet and his accomplice had returned before Zeluco had even reached the town. The former, on hearing that a surgeon was sent for, and seeing blood on his master's arm, was astonished, and cried, How is it possible, sir, that you can be wounded? For—

Peace, babbler, said Zeluco.

Can any thing be more natural, said Father Pedro, with a sarcastical smile, than for pistols to make wounds, especially when fired by two such bloody-minded ruffians? But I must now leave you, signor; you may depend on my prayers for your recovery, and that you may soon reap the fruits of your generous valor. He then withdrew, convinced that the wound was fictitious, and invented as a natural incident in the farce, which would be better acted by the master, the servant, and the surgeon, without his taking any part.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A medical consultation.

As Father Pedro went out, a physician and surgeon entered the room together. It was found that the bullet had entered the arm, near the shoulder, and without having injured the bone or joint, was felt beneath the skin on the opposite side.

It was extracted without difficulty after an incision. The doctor and surgeon then retired to another room to consult. The latter was a Frenchman of some humor, a considerable share of shrewdness, and much of a coxcomb.

This wound is nothing, said the doctor.

We must try to make something of it, however, replied the surgeon.

It will heal of itself directly, resumed the doctor.

It must therefore not be left to itself, said the surgeon.

What farther do you intend? said the physician: little more seems necessary, except applying some fresh lint every day.

Lascia far' a Marc Antonio, replied the surgeon; I will take care that his excellency shall not be exposed to danger on the high road for at least a month to come.

Unless it be to prescribe some cooling physic, and such a low regimen as will prevent his suffering from want of exercise, I can do nothing, said the physician.

That is doing a great deal, said the surgeon; it keeps the patient in low spirits, and renders him obedient.

But after all, how do you intend to treat the wound itself? said the physician.

I intend to treat it *secundum artem*, replied the surgeon.

Bené, bené respondisti, said the physician; and so much for the wound.—Now, pray what say you to the news? continued the physician; they talk of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean.

Whether that will take place or not, said the surgeon, depends entirely on the king's pleasure.

How so? said the physician; how can his majesty prevent it?

By threatening to sink them if they presumed to enter the Straights, replied the surgeon. The Toulon fleet will be sufficient.

Toulon fleet! cried the physician: Why what king do you mean?

Why, the king of France, to be sure, replied the surgeon: What other king can I mean?

Vi prego discusarmi, signor, cried the physician; but in speaking of the king in Naples, I thought the king of Naples might perhaps be meant.

Ai fe di Dio, signor, replied the surgeon; non m'è venuto mai in pensiero; but I believe, added he, looking at his watch, our consultation has lasted a decent time enough.

The physician being of the same opinion, they returned to the patient's bed-chamber. The doctor ordered a low diet, and cooling pisans in great abundance.

What do you think of the wound? said Zeluco to the surgeon.

It would be rash to speak decisively at the very first dressing, signor, said the surgeon.

But what is your general action? resumed Zeluco.

Why, signor, if my friend here will answer for keeping down the fever, I will do my best to save your excellency's arm.

Save my arm! exclaimed Zeluco; I would rather be damned than lose my arm, sir.

That may be, signor, said the surgeon, but people are not always allowed their choice on such occasions.

Zounds, sir! exclaimed Zeluco; do you think there is any danger of my losing my arm?

I am determined to save it, if possible, said the surgeon, and it will afford me great pleasure to succeed.

Here the physician interfering, begged of Zeluco to be composed, for nothing retarded the cure of wounds more than impatience; he hoped, by the great skill of his friend, every thing would terminate to his satisfaction, provided he would be resigned, and follow the directions that from time to time would be given him.

With much internal chagrin, Zeluco was obliged to assume the appearance of serenity, and he promised to obey the injunctions of those two learned gentlemen.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The French Surgeon.

THE following day the physician and surgeon did not think it expedient to take the dressings from the wound, but renewed their injunctions that Zeluco should be kept exceedingly quiet, take his medicines punctually, and strictly adhere to the coolest regimen. As the wound now was more painful than at first, the patient became apprehensive of losing his arm, and complied with the directions given, though not without breaking out frequently into violent execrations on the unlucky chance by which he was reduced to the necessity of suffering such penance.

Madame de Seidlitz had sent a message, desiring that the surgeon might call at her house when he left his patient.

He went accordingly; and found Father Mulo with her.

I am extremely happy, madam, said the surgeon, to have this opportunity of paying you my devoirs; it is an honor I have long wished for. I perceive, by the brilliancy of your looks, that you are in charming health.

Pray, sir, said Madame de Seidlitz with impatience, how do you find —?

I ask you ten thousand pardons, madam, for interrupting you, said the surgeon; but I beg to know, before you proceed, how the amiable and accomplished young lady, your daughter, does?

My daughter is very well, sir, answered Madame de Seidlitz: now will you be so obliging —

You may command whatever is in my power, madam, said the surgeon, bowing very low.

Then pray tell me, sir, how you left your patient?

I have a great many patients, madam; but I presume your ladyship inquires, at present, for Signor Zeluco.

I do, sir, and earnestly beg to know how you left him? Much better than I found him, madam—I have cut a bullet out of him.

Poor gentleman! cried Madame de Seidlitz.

He is not the poorer for that, madam, said the surgeon; he is a great gainer by what has been taken from him.